



# 伝説の勇者の伝説 10

## 孤軍奮闘の王様

ライナ・リュートは死んだ。

何者かに胸を刺され、

おびただしい血を流し、

意識は薄れ、

心臓は鼓動を止め、

ライナ・リュートの生命の灯火が、

消えた…………

衝撃的展開で加速するストーリー！  
アンチ・ヒロイック・サーガ、第十弾！

# 伝説の勇者の伝説 10

## 孤軍奮闘の王様

### 鏡 貴也



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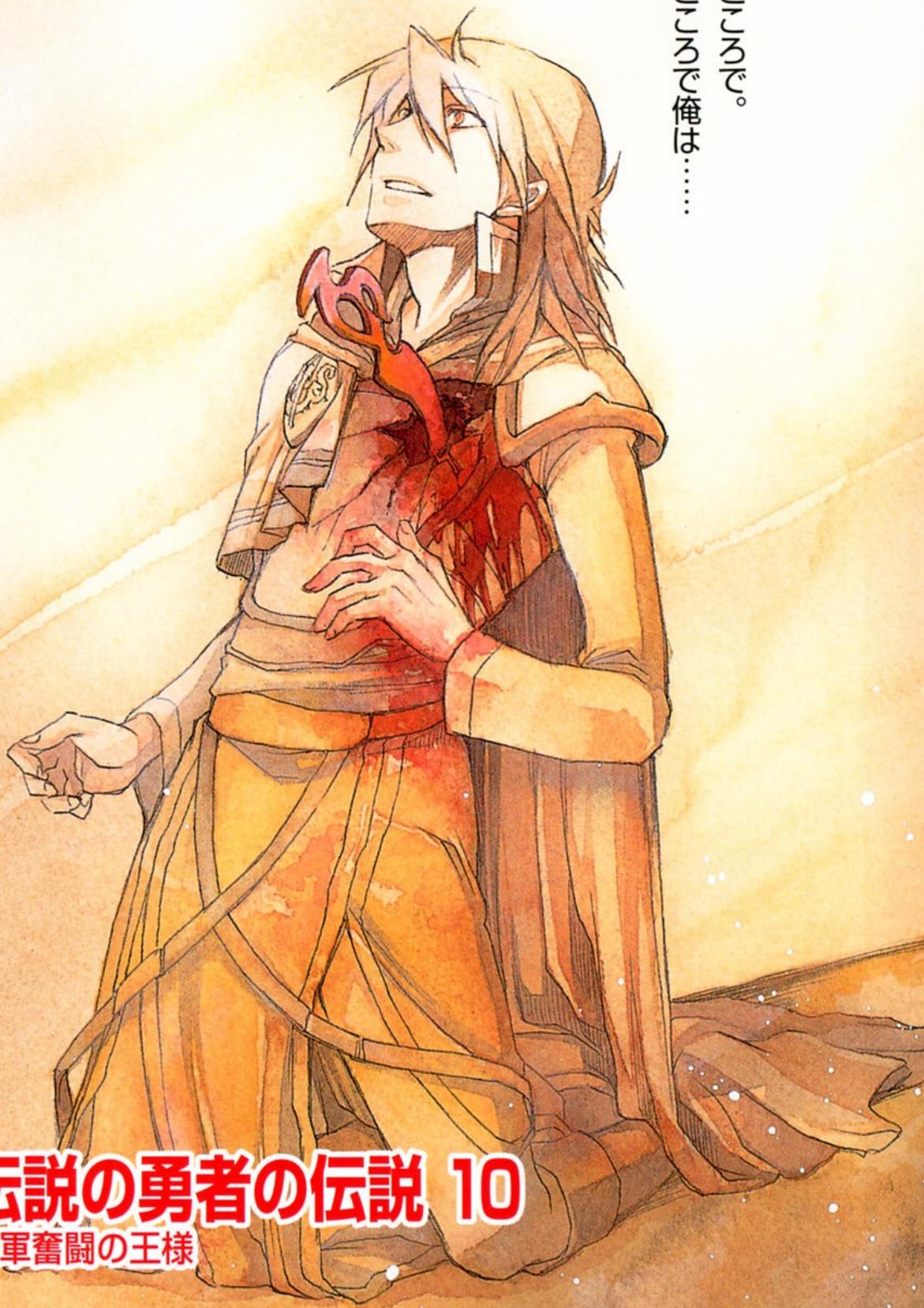
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伝説の勇者の伝説 10

鏡 貴也

嫌だ。

こんなとこりで。  
こんなとこりで俺は……

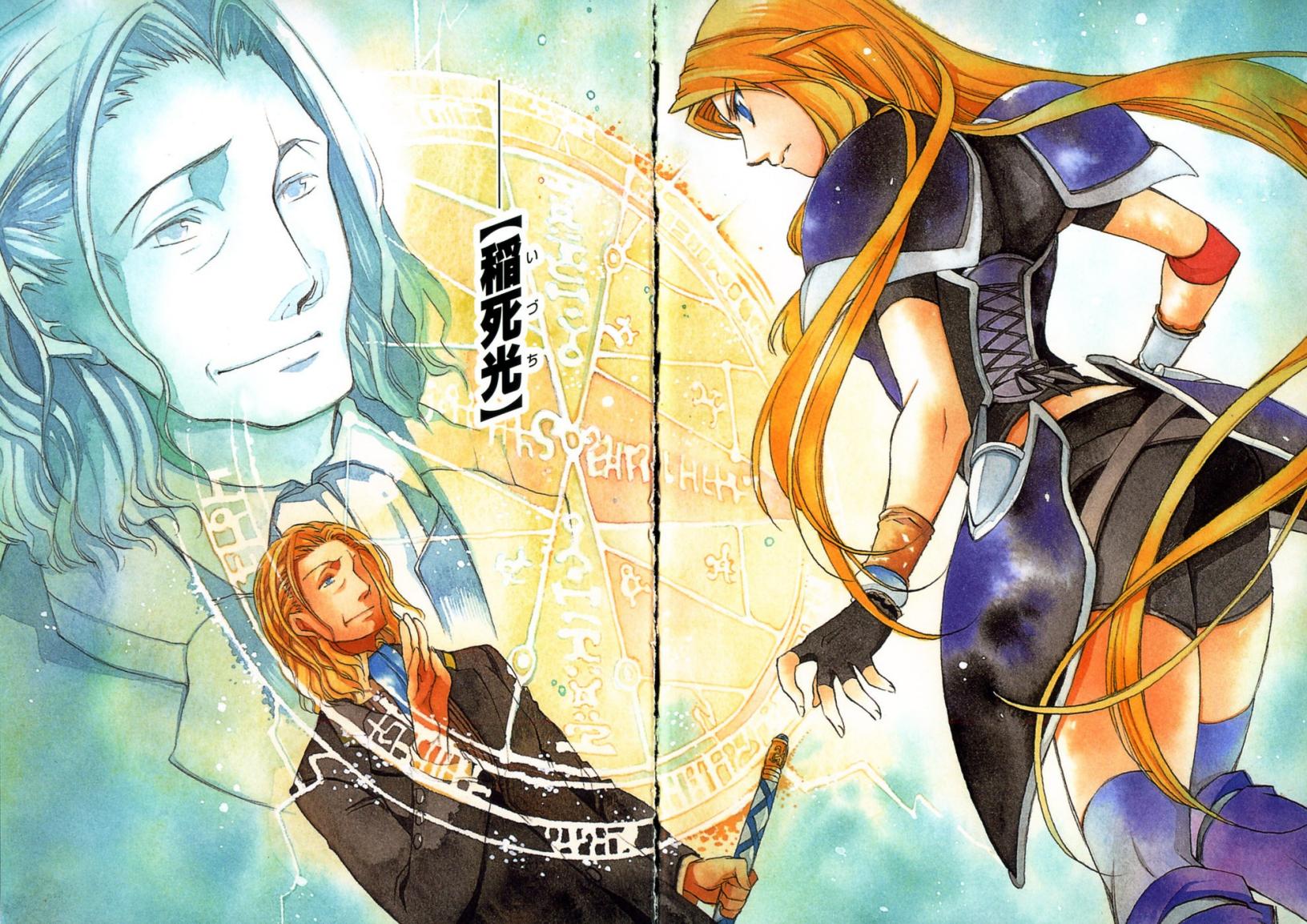


# 伝説の勇者の伝説 10

孤軍奮闘の王様

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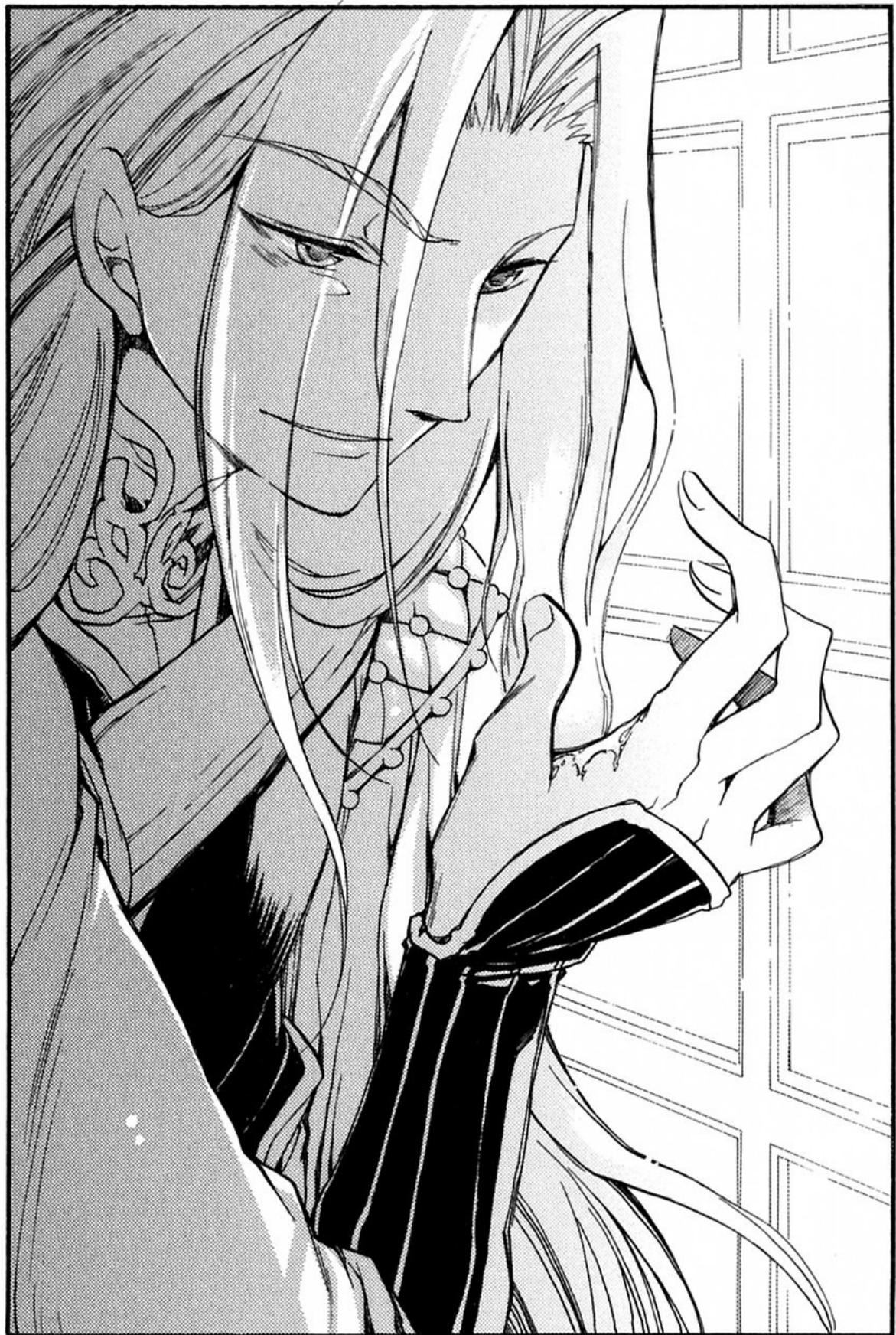
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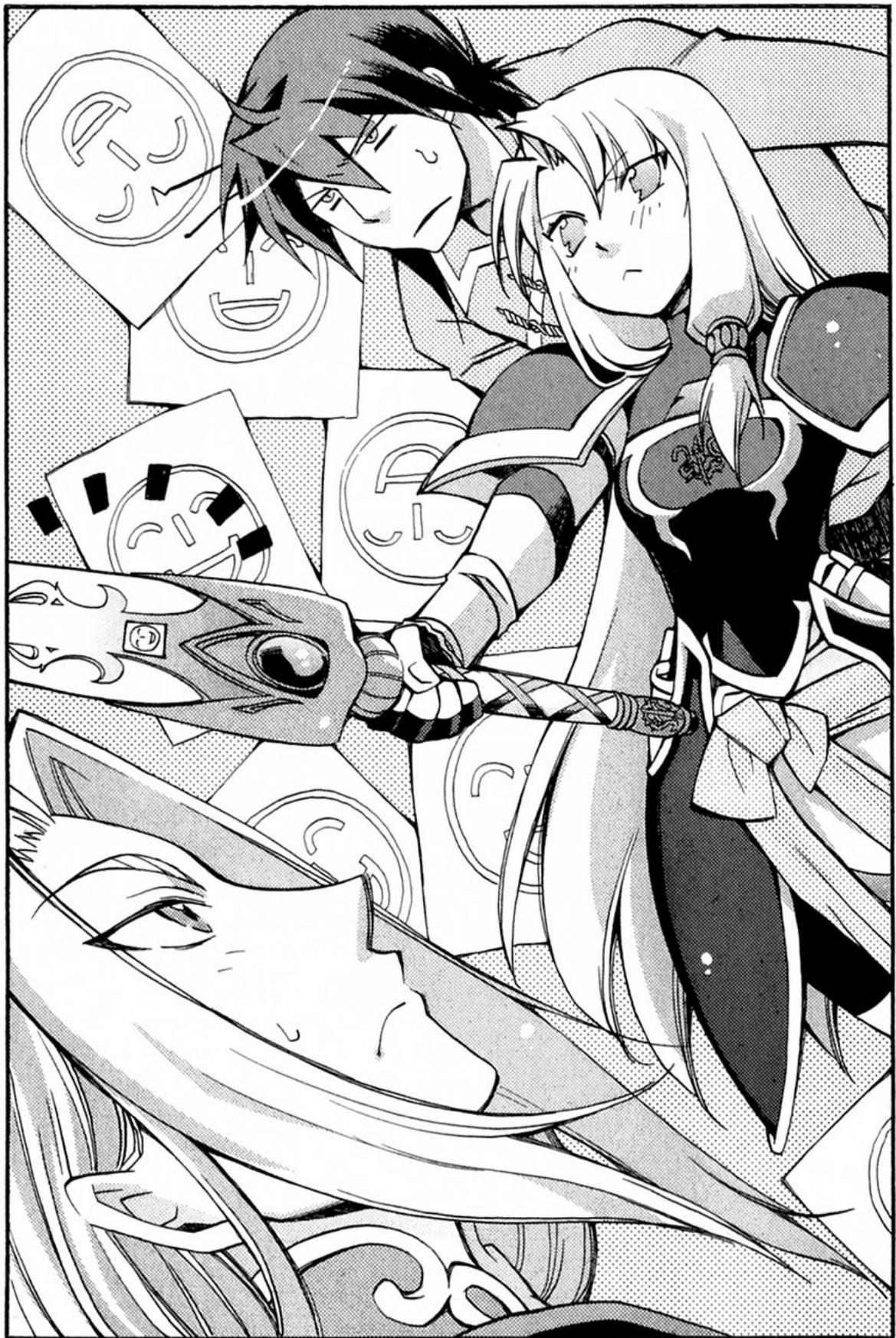
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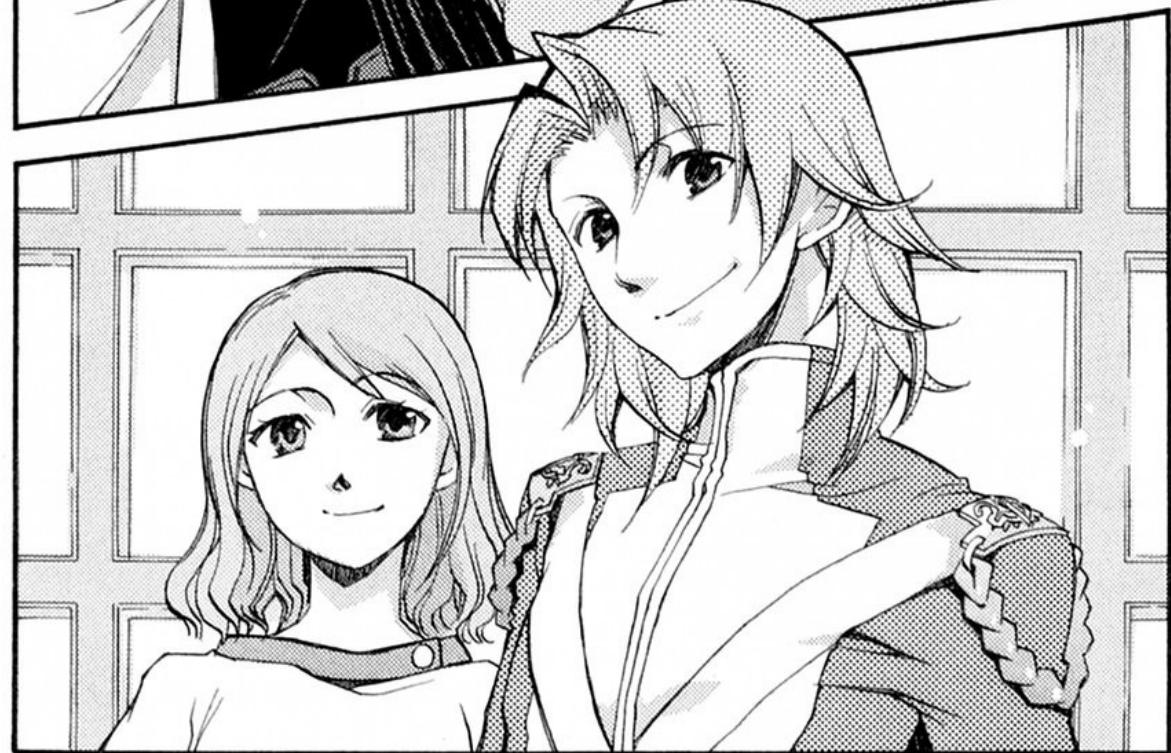
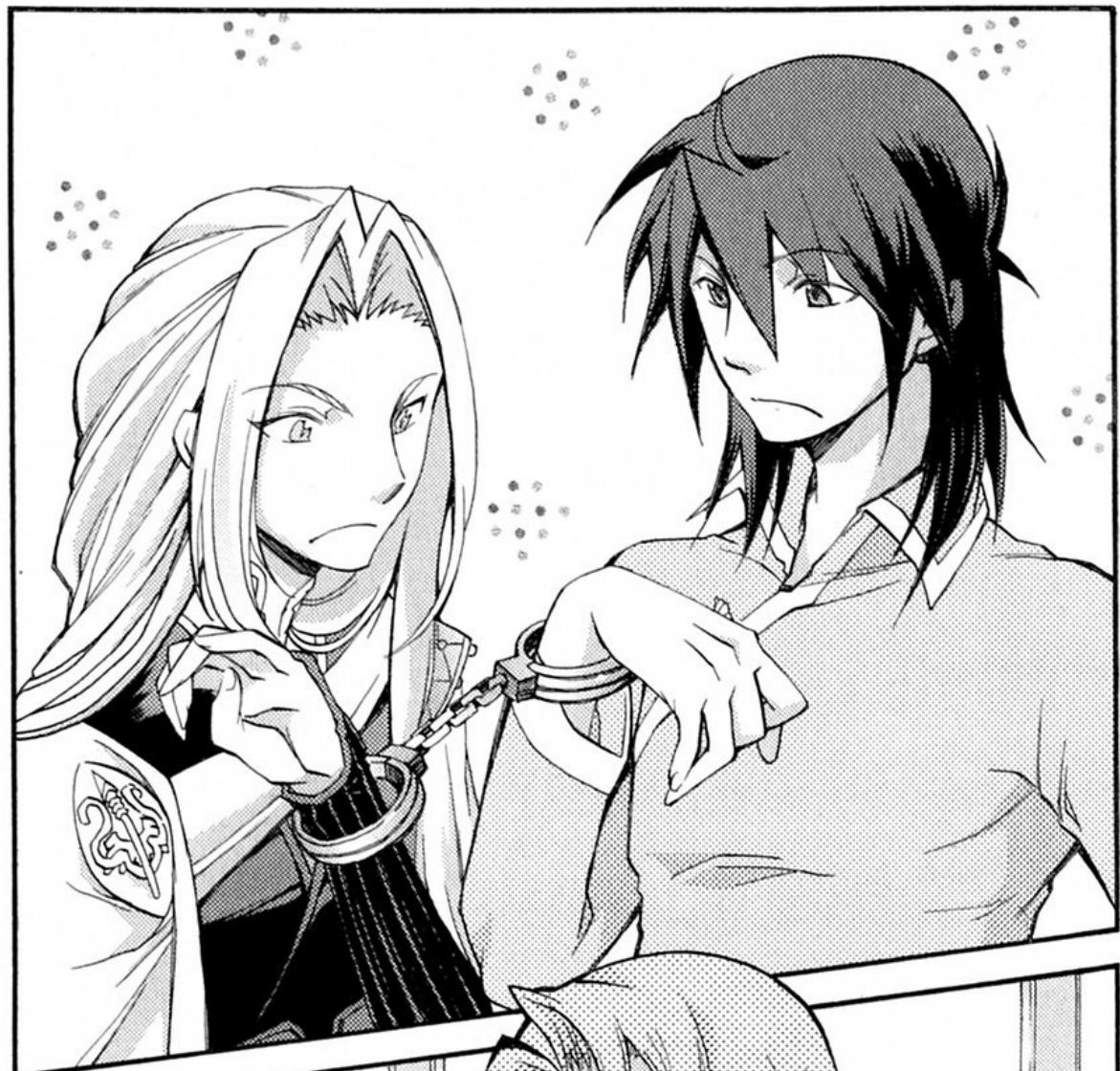




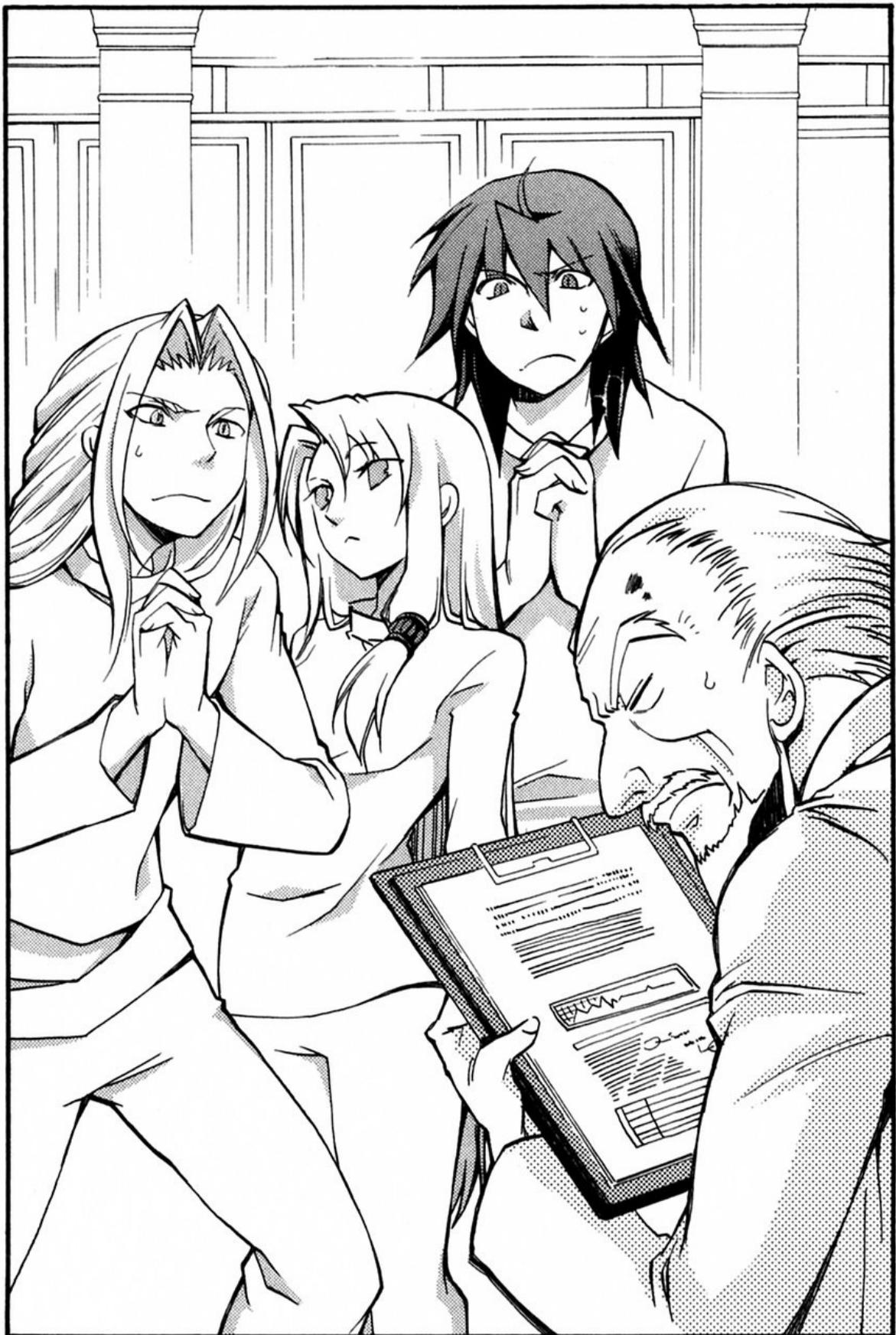














## **Chapter 4: Scenery of death**

“...”

Blood was flowing out... from his chest.

Blood was pouring out from his chest.

Something like a dagger was stabbed in his chest.

Ryner looked down on the things.

So he saw an image of death.

An entrance straight to death.

“...Ah.”

He could not even make any noise.

Blood—

From his chest...

How can it turn out this way?

After much difficulty I...

This means, I will die here...

No.

I do not want to die in this place.

In this place, I do not want to...

“...”

But, everything stopped there.

His consciousness was only maintained till this moment.

His strength rapidly disappeared from his body.

His knees went limp with a clack, no longer able to support this body weight.  
A strong iciness and loneliness surrounded him.  
And then.

“...”

Ryner's heart stopped beating.

His life disappeared.

His life vanished.

His life dissipated.

The fire of Ryner Lute's life.

It disappeared...

In that moment.

Huaa—a sound sounded, the world suddenly contorted.  
In front of Ryner who should already be dead.

The scene twisted, crumbled, contorted, all the colours were mixed together...

It was stained with a blood-red colour.

It became a blood-red colour.

It became a blood-red colours.

Ryner saw this.

“.....Ugh, ah? What is this?”

He could not help but say

Then he immediately spoke again:

“...Eh? I able to talk? Eh? Ah? Didn’t I die...”

At this moment, his eyes widened, and he looked at himself.

He looked at the road back from the palace.

The chest that had been stabbed by someone with a dagger, his chest where he should be dead and lying on the ground.

But, what Ryner saw now was...

“...”

He was not on the ground.

There was no dagger stabbed in his chest.

No, what was more important was—

“.....Why am I dressed like this.....?”

He looked at himself with a troubled expression.

Then he discovered—

“...”

His body was stained with an unusual colour.

A pure white colour.

A completely pure white colour.

A pure white body that blurry, as if it did not exist.

And surrounding his body was a black...

“...Are these words?”

Yes.

Words surrounded his body.

Several black words were interlinked, as if floating in the air, surrounding his arms, body, feet, the circles were encircled on his white body

And the linking words were...

“.....Uh~eh? Are these a subspecies of ancient text? But this type of ancient text...”

He had never them before. He completely did not know how to pronounce them.

Ryner raised his arms that were surrounded by the words, after staring at them for a good while, then he said:

“...What is going on?”

Following that he looked around him.

He was presently in a strange space.

A blood-red world.

His whole vision was stained with red, red, red.

A blood-red world as if using a water bucket to pour blood water on a white piece of paper.

A red ceiling.

A red floor.

A red corridor that stretched out straight.

This was the place that Ryner was in.

“What has happened?”

Ryner said, slowly reaching out to touch the red walls.

Then.

“Go in.”

A voice suddenly descended from the sky.

From the sky.

No, this voice entered his mind directly.

Ryner narrowed his eyes when he heard the voice.

“...”

What was going on?

Ryner asked himself.

What had happened?

Where was this?

He tried to affirm the situation again.

His white body.

Black words surrounding his whole body, as if he had been cursed.

And a space where everything was red.

Was this the real world?

Or...

“Don’t tell me I went to Heaven after dying...”

But, the voice sounded again as if interrupting his thoughts.

“Go in.”

The voice descended.

“.....Or did I go to Hell?”

Ryner frowned and said.

Then he tried to affirm the situation that he was in again.

Why had he come here?

“If I didn’t remember wrongly...”

I remember I was on the way back from Sion’s place.

I was suddenly attacked by a monster dressed like a Mage Knight, after fighting with him, I found out that there was an enemy behind me...

I was stabbed in the chest with something like a dagger.

That was clearly a mortal blow.

I should already be dead.

Yes.

I died.

Then, what is this image happening now...

At this moment, the voice sounded again.

“Go in, **Offering**.”

“...Offering...?”

Ryner raised his head when he heard this.

Then he stared at the back of the red corridor.

“...What are you?”

He asked that.

But.

“Go in, **Offering**. We have made this kind of contract long ago.”

The voice said.

A deep, deep voice that could stir the air.

A voice that was filled with an overwhelming presence, as if it could raise the fear from people’s hearts.

Ryner knew that voice.

“...”

That was a voice that he had heard several times.

The voice that would descend from the sky every time Ryner's **Alpha Stigma** lost control.

Ryner recalled it.

He recalled that voice.

“God. Demon. Devil. Hero. Monster. What do you call me? What do you call me? Hahahahahahahaha.”

“You want to kill me? With your present power you want to kill me? You plan to kill me with that sort of power from “**Elemtio**”? The ant crawling on the ground says it wants to kill me? Ha, hahaha, hahahahaha. Disappear. Vanish. Dissipate. Turn everything to dust. Nothing. Revert to nothing.”

“**α** is destruction. I do not create anything. I do not patronize people. I do no save. I only destroy. Turn everything to nothing.”

Ryner always cursed that voice.

He glared at the corridor before him and said:

“...Are you **Alpha Stigma**? ”

And then.

“...Heh, heh heh heh, hahaha, a lowly offering dares to ask my name?”

“From your tone, you aren't **Alpha Stigma** right?”

Ryner said, so the voice laughed again.

“Ha, haha, ha... That is the name of my clone. Clone, copy, fake... The name of the illusionary marionette that has been born because of my influence.”

Ryner heard that.

“...Clone?”

Ryner's thoughts spun.

**Alpha Stigma** was a clone...

At this moment, he remembered.

He remembered what the assassin from Gastark, called Lir had told him.

“**Alpha Stigma** monster... no, it should be more appropriate to call you the **Solver of All Equations?**”

The **Solver of All Equations...**

He had called Ryner that.

Ryner completely did not know what was the meaning of this...

This was probably the difference between Ryner and the other **Alpha Stigmas.**

That meant...

Ryner stared at the corridor before him again and asked:

“That means, you are the **Solver of All Equations**, right?”

But the answer he received was—

“Heh heh, idiot, that is your name.”

“.....My name? I am called.....Ryner Lute.”

“That’s wrong.”

“It can’t be wrong.”

“No. You are the **Offering**. You are the **Key**. You are...the **Solver of All Equations.**”

The other party said that.

“...Ah? What are you saying?”

Ryner was more confused the more he listened.

No, he did not even know where he was now...

But, he was not even clear on his own identity, what was going on?

Not long ago, he thought that he was Ryner Lute, he was an **Alpha Stigma** monster.

A monster that hurt others, that was tabooed, discriminated by people.

So, he had always escaped from interacting with people, running away continuously.

But, now someone was suddenly telling him, you are not Ryner, and telling him, you are not a bearer of **Alpha Stigma**, you are the **Solver of All Equations**, and he always thought the **Solver of All Equations** was the name of his eyes, he did not think that this was not the case.

That was Ryner's name, he was the **Offering**, the **Key**, the **Solver of All Equations**.

That was Ryner's name...

What was going on, Ryner was truly no

But—Ryner glared at the corridor and said:

“.....If that is the case, then what are you? You are the person dwelling in my eyes, right? You are the person that always... always made me suffer, right? If that is so, then what are you?”

So the voice said with a gleeful tone:

“I am God.”

“...Don't be disgusting!”

Ryner could not help but shout:

“...God? You say that you are god? Someone like you is God? Because of you, I have suffered from many pains...”

But, the voice interrupted him and continued:

“Hu, haha,

“ ”  
• • •

That is my name.

That is your name.

## What did that mean?

Ryner could not understand, asking again:

“.....What.....connection do you have with me?”

Then.

“Heh heh, if you want to know everything, then go in.”

Ryner heard that, looking in front of him.

He saw the blood-red scene that occupied his whole vision.

A blood-red wall.

A blood-red ceiling.

And blood-red corridor.

“...”

But, Ryner had already noticed it.

The red colour that drowned this whole world was that colour.

The colour he hated most.

The colour of the curse.

The red that made him unhappy, and grabbed on tightly to him.

The colour of the five-pointed star that appeared in his eyes.

## **Alpha Stigma.**

“...This is... the interior of my body...?”

“Go in.”

“...”

“Look at the truth lying within you.”

Hearing that voice...

“...”

Ryner took one step forward.

☆

A corpse lay on the ground.

Lieral Lieutolu stared at that body.

Golden hair.

Deep blue eyes.

Clean and tidy black clothes.

Lieral had a strangely slightly lazy, as if sleepy steady expression, gently patting his son Ryner's body.

Affirming that the power of the **Rhule Fragmei** in his chest, the **Curse of Artofaal** had already been activated.

“...That's good, has he entered?”

He nodded gently.

Then stood up, ordering the man beside him.

The monster that wore the same Mage Knight clothes as his son—a strange battle outfit consisting of white armour and a long robe...

“Bring Ryner with you and escape.”

The man nodded when he heard this, making to carry Ryner.

But at this moment—

“...You moving around as you please will cause trouble, Duke Lieutolu.”

A voice sounded from before them.

Lieral smiled when he heard the voice.

“I knew... you would come.”

Saying that, he raised his head.

And he saw a unbelievably beautiful man standing before him.

Golden hair, eyes that were shut tightly.

And, beautiful features that could even said to not exist in the world.

No... this person was no longer human.

Lieral stared at the beautiful man before him and said:

“Ah... It has been a long time since we’ve met, Lucile Eris. You have grown so big.”

Lucile laughed lightly when he heard that.

“...It’s been a long time, Duke Lieutolu.”

But, Lieral waved his hand, interrupting him.

“Don’t call me Duke or anything. I am no longer a noble of Roland... the

Lieutolu family has ended.”

But, Lucile still carried a smile when he heard that.

“That’s not the case, right? Isn’t your son still here? Ryner Lute... No, it’s Ryner Lieutolu.”

Lieral heard that, looking at Ryner who was on the ground, then shrugged.

“Now he’s dead.”

“...He’s not dead yet. Didn’t you let him see the Door? You doing that, would make me troubled. This is not the stage to let Ryner see the door.”

Lieral heard that, glaring at Lucile.

“That is not up to you to decide?”

But, Lucile still laughed lightly and said:

“Then, apart from me, who can decide that?”

“Me.”

“Haha. Please don’t joke. How can you calmly make decisions? Because you place your son before the entire world.”

Lieral still had a lethargic expression after hearing that.

“...Haha. I do view my son as being more important than the world. But, you’re not in the position to laugh at me like this, right? For your younger sister, you who gave up on being human...”

“...”

Hearing that, Lucile was unable to say anything.

He only smiled.

But, Lieral continued:

“Anyway, we are similar people. To protect the people we like, we abandoned important things. But, I don’t think this is a bad indicator. Isn’t

that so? In the end humans are organisms that care about themselves. My actions are decided by myself. And you only need to act according to your own interests.”

Lucile laughed when he heard that.

“Then, your method is using your wife as an offering?”

But, Lieral did not fall for Lucile’s challenge. He knelt down slowly, gently patting Ryner’s black hair... soft and black hair that was like this wife’s, then said:

“You are free to act according your own wishes. I... No, we love Ryner deeply.”

“You’re mad.”

Lieral laughed when he heard that.

“It’s about the same as you.”

Lucile heard that, but he still smiled.

“...You are as troublesome as expected.”

He said that.

Lieral said when he heard that:

“If that’s the case, then let’s move immediately? I can’t let Ryner be eaten by your new marionette.”

Saying that, he stood up.

Then told the Mage Knight who was awaiting his orders at the side:

“Taken Ryner, and bring him to a place as far away from this place if possible.”

The man nodded, flying forward with Ryner.

At this moment.

“How can I let you move as you wish.”

Lucile’s figure wavered.

He attempted to snatch Ryner.

But, Lieral said with a steady expression:

“Chloe, Ai, Shurieo.”

He chanted an incantation softly.

“Ancient words...? Is it a secret spell?”

But, he found it out too late.

Lieral smiled, raising his foot and stepping on the ground heavily.

At the same time, several blue words appeared on the ground around Lieral, flying towards Lucile.

“...Be cursed, Lucile Eris.”

At this moment Lucile’s expression changed for the first time.

Lucile raised his right hand.

“The sword that cuts through light.”

He chanted softly.

And a sharp but dark light emerged on the upper part of his arm, he waved that light.

Gently waving it, the few curse words that attacked him were chopped...

He destroyed the secret curse that was formed from ancient text.

He easily destroyed the curse that humans created to kill deities...

“...”

The ease of this movement had surpassed the limits of humans as expected.

It was not a power that humans would have.

“...How many contracts did you make?”

Lieral asked, Lucile smiled again.

“A thousand.”

A thousand!?

Lieral heard that, revealing a surprised expression.

This was impossible.

A thousand...

Could humans bear the power that came from the contracts with more than a thousand demons?

“As expected you are...”

But, Lucile still carried a smile, continuing Lieral’s words:

“...The mad one isn’t only me.”

Then, he raised his sword high.

“But, you will die here.”

But, Lieral laughed when he heard that.

“Is that so?”

Saying that, he pulled the necklace off his neck.

The necklace that had a fiery red jewel attached to it.

This was the protection charm that the god of Runa Empire had gifted to the Runa Princess.

He raised the beaded necklace.

“Do you know what is thi~s?”

Lieral said that with a frivolous voice.

But Lucile did not react upon seeing that.

**“Divine Beast Destroyer… But, to me that sort of thing is…”**

“I know. This sort of thing probably can’t kill you? You are a monster that even a weapon that can kill beasts wouldn’t be effective on you… but…”

Lieral said, shifting the necklace away from Lucile to a different place.

Behind Lucile.

The center of this country.

The direction of where the capital was.

Then he said:

“A necklace like this… is able to destroy one or two castles. At that time, what will happen to your marionette?”

“...”

Lucile heard that, and moved, attempting to stop Lieral.

But, Lieral had already thrown the necklace out.

“Shatter, **Divine Beast Destroyer.**”

In a split second.

The fiery red bead in the center of the necklace stopped in the air.

Then it trembled continuously, starting to absorb light, sucking in all the light in its surroundings.

The sky, the air, and the ground lost its light…

It was still early, but the darkness… suddenly the dark night covered their

surroundings.

Lieral saw this, staring at Lucile he said:

“Ne, it’s already late, can I leave first?”

So Lucile glared at him viciously.

“...You...”

“Look, this isn’t the time to be troubling me? Your precious marionette and capital are about to disappear...”

When he said that, the necklace

Lightning—the fire that was used to kill deities.

That light

Lieral said:

“Ugh, it’s already too late.”

The capital was about to be destroyed.

Even that marionette.

But, at the same time Lucile waved his right hand.

In a moment, the black light that seemed like a sword on his right hand disappeared.

Then.

“The reptile spinning in the air.”

He muttered, another sword appeared on his right hand.

But, that sword was different from the one earlier.

A different incantation.

A different contract.

A blue sword that seemed to be slightly transparent appeared...

The Sword Family.

People called them that...

Lucile looked over:

“It seems like who is the victor will have to be put aside for now. But the next time we meet...”

Lieral shrugged.

“Next time I will find an incantation that can kill you. Of course that is if you aren’t dead because of the **Divine Beast Destroyer**...”

At this moment.

The bead in the necklace jumped.

In a moment.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM?  
!

An explosive light, that made people dazzled covered the whole world.

The light headed straight to the capital.

Flames that could destroy everything.

The city of Roland was about to be disappear without any traces...

That should have been so.

But, in the moment before that.

Lucile smiled.

“Then I will see you next time.”

His figure disappeared.

At the same time.

The flames of the **Divine Beast Destroyer**...

“...”

They were stopped.

The sword stopped that light of **Shiparms** that could swallow a hundred deities, and was said to be the irreplaceable power that could destroy the whole world...

Lucile disappeared without a trace.

Lieral said when he saw that:

“.....Ah~ Ah~ Really, damn monster.”

He said in surprise, turning around.

Then he remembered what Lucile said.

It seems like who is the victor will have to be put aside for now.

The victor...

“But, what should I do... to deal with that kind of monster?”

A monster that was more challenging than he had imagined.

If this continued...

“...”

Lieral shook his head, sighing softly.

“...This is bad.”

He raised his head to the sky.



There was only nothingness there.

An extremely large nothingness.

A nothingness that was almost sad.

He shouted.

He shouted no.

A voice rang in his mind—*do not move forward*.

But, he could not stop.

His feet still moved forward, step by step.

One step.

Another step.

There seemed to be something in front...

Although he did not know what was before him, but he was unable to stop.

He had gained it after much difficulty.

He had offered what was important to him, gaining it after much difficulty.

One step.

Another step.

The gears made a screeching noise, spinning continuously.

He saw light.

He saw darkness.

That was a world with nothing.

Everything was an illusion.

That world—

It was completely different from the world that he was chasing after.

But, he could no longer stop.

So...

“...”

Sion sighed lightly.

Then he looked out of his window.

The office window.

He stared at the scene of the strong light jumping, followed by it being stopped.

“.....Is it Lucile?”

He muttered softly, so a clear voice sounded from behind him.

“It has already ended.”

It was Lucile’s voice.

But, Sion did not turn back.

Anyway Lucile was always appearing and disappearing in quick succession, there was no need to turn back.

Sion continued to ask:

“...What about Duke Lieutolu?”

So Lucile was silent for a moment, then said:

“...He escaped.”

He replied like this.

Sion turned back when he heard this, a smile on his face.

“...Hah. It doesn’t seem like what you would do... Were you unable to kill him?”

But, there was no one behind him as he expected.

Only a large book case.

But, Lucile’s voice sounded from near the book shelf.

“...Heh, heh heh... your attitude in speaking... seems to have become quite presumptuous... But, Sion, the one who said that wasn’t the time to kill Lieutolu yet before this... wasn’t it you?”

Yes.

He had said that in the past.

But, Sion shrugged.

“.....It’s no longer important. Everything is no longer important. Anyway as long as matters continue to progress...”

He said with a tired voice.

Then he looked before him again.

Froaude who was before him stared at him with a surprised expression.

Then said with a trembling voice:

“.....You... what deity are you?”

He asked Sion that.

Who are you?

“.....Heh, heh heh.....”

Sion found it funny.

“...Who? Haha... Who... Yes, who, is it?”

In that moment, the voice resounded in his mind again.

*Stop.*

You should stop.

This is not what you want.

If you continue going down this...

If you continue..... *Be quiet, you coward!*

“...”

So, the voice in his mind stopped.

Sion told Froaude who was staring at him:

“...I...am the ideal king that you wanted... isn’t that so? The things that I let you look at earlier represents everything.”

Froaude heard that, still carrying a troubled expression.

“...You are indeed the king that I want. A strong king with no hint of confusion. A king who is chosen by the gods. But...”

But, Sion interrupted him.

“I said it before, the things I let you see earlier represents everything. Are you

not satisfied?"

"..."

Froaude heard this, smiling.

A dark smile.

But it was a happy smile that seemed to tremble because of a large sense of joy.

Then he said:

"No... I am satisfied. Then I..."

Sion nodded.

"...Kill that person. Because he is the true enemy..."

That person.

Yes.

If they did not kill that person quickly...

So.

"...I will follow your orders..."

Froaude bowed, leaving the room.

After watching him leave, Sion breathed in deeply.

At the same time.

".....Ugh..... Ah..... Cough!"

He coughed lightly.

In a moment, he quickly used his hand to cover his mouth, then blood...

Blood...

But, Sion saw this—

“.....Heh..... Heh heh..... Heh heh heh!”

He seemed to laugh as if finding it amusing.

“.....Haha, ahahaha!”

This was—

This is what I wanted.

Is this is what I wanted?

He looked at his palm.

The blood staining his hand.

The blood that he had coughed out.

That colour.

He looked at the golden liquid that was giving out a glow that made people unhappy...

“.....”

At this moment, his body suddenly felt weak.

There was a feeling as if some power had been snatched from his body by something else.

An uncomfortable feeling as if something had been swapped in his body.

“...”

He collapsed on the chair like this.

His whole body felt really lethargic.

He was not used to this state yet.

He was unable to continue with this in the long term.

At this moment, a voice sounded in the empty space again.

“...You don't have to push yourself too hard. There is no need to be so

rushed about it.”

It was Lucile.

Sion laughed wryly when he heard this:

“...Haha. I didn’t think that you would be concerned for me.”

Saying that, he looked at his palm again.

Then he suddenly remembered.

He remembered when he had started to become like this.

When did it start?

“...”

That was a memory of the distant past.

He remembered it was when he first knew Ryner and Ferris.

The matter had happened after Kiefer’s betrayal, fighting with the Estabul Mage Knights, the companions all being killed, and the battle of Ryner’s **Alpha Stigma** going berserk.

Sion had headed to the Eris Family to see Ferris and Iris, in the end he was taken to the dojo where Lucile was in.

At this moment he suddenly remembered the words that Ferris told him, when he returned from the battle.

“*What? You’re still alive? That’s not interesting at all...*”

“...Really, from that moment onwards, Ferris’s mouth became unforgiving.”

Sion remembered, and could not help but smile wryly.

Anyway, when he was talking with Ferris, Lucile appeared.

Then he suddenly said this to Sion.

*“Sion, the reason why I asked you to come here today is... I wanted to listen to your opinions.”*

He remembered that he asked this in return.

“*My opinon?*”

So Lucile continued:

*“Yes. I am going to ask you a few questions now. These few questions can let me judge whether you are a suitable candidate. I am going to ask you these questions.”*

*“Ah... Suitable...? Ugh, it’s not a problem if you want me to answer... is that all?”*

*“Eh. That’s all. I was looking for you because of this matter. But, you have to accept a condition before I ask the questions.”*

“A condition?”

*“Eh. I will ask you a few questions. If I don’t like your answer, I will kill you. Relax. It wouldn’t hurt. You wouldn’t even know that your head has left your body. You would only be dead.”*

Dead...

At that point in time Sion had thought of this.

*What is this man saying?*

*The questions that he asks, if my answer does not satisfy him, he will kill me?*

That is the condition that he raised, that Sion had to follow at the same time as he accepted the questioning. If he did not agree to this condition, then he

would be unable to accept the questioning...

It was really strange.

*Why do I have to accept such a dangerous questioning?*

He remembered he had thought of that at that time.

But, at this moment Lucile said:

*“This is the Eris Family, Sion.”*

That sentence.

Made Sion understand everything.

This is the Eris Family, Sion.

The Family that only served the king for generations.

And the current head of the family was saying he wanted to test if Sion was suitable?

That meant, he was to test him, to see if Sion was suitable to be the king of this country.

And Sion desired to be the king of this country.

He strongly hoped that he could eliminate his father who was the most evil tyranny, and become the king of this country.

At that time he had thought, this was he could protect Ryner, Kiefer, his companions, everything in this country... and, protect his deceased mother.

Because of that, Sion decided to accept Lucile's questioning.

At that time Ferris said:

*“How boring. Are you throwing your life that you managed to get back from the battle after much difficulty?”*

She clearly reminded him in that way.

But Sion ignored her words.

That was clearly the last chance to turn back.

But Sion ignored... her words.

Because, he had already decided not to be confused.

No, the path that he should proceed on had already been decided on that battle field.

He once lost everything.

But he still wanted to proceed.

If he had this power, then he could kill everything right?

Brothers, sisters... even the king...

Even so...

Sion said this:

*“Alright! Ask them. Tell me... Lucile Eris.”*

He would never forget the smile on Lucile's face for the rest of his life.

*“Haha. I knew you would probably say that.”*

He would never forget the expression on Lucile's face for the rest of his life.

Then.

Sion thought.

*I already cannot stop.*

*I have to kill the people who block my way.*

*To reach this destination, I can accept all the conditions.*

*Even if it is... the Demon...*

He had thought of this at that time.

“...”

But.

In actuality what had appeared was not the Demon.

What appeared before Sion was...

Regret.

Despair.

And the contract.

Behind the dojo.

The place where Lucile Eris stayed.

He was bought to the depths of the darkness where the complete nothingness was spread...

He saw a light.

A strong light.

The other side of the **Door**.

The other side of that **Door**.

A light giving off an extremely ominous aura sparkled there.

At that time he should have turned back.

At that time he should have the time to turn back!!

But, the gears were revolving.

The story was pushing forward continuously.

That was an extremely sad story.

A story that was very meaningless.

That was—

“The Legend... of the legendary Mad Hero”

Opening the door, Lucile laughed.

*Always.*

*I have always been waiting for you.*

*Ne, become my master.*

*Throw everything to one side, offer everything as an offering, ne, become my master.*

*Become the master of my sword.*

*You.*

*You will eat, opening everything in this world...*

*You are the **Hero**.*

“.....The **Hero**.....”

Sion sat on the chair, continuing to look at his palm.

Then, the voice spoke from behind him.

“...Don’t worry, Sion. The story is progressing smoothly... So, you don’t have to push yourself too hard.”

“...”

Sion heard this, he wanted to laugh again.

Sion heard this, he wanted to cry again.

The story was progressing smoothly.

The story...

At this moment, Sion closed his hand hard, clenching his fist.

Clenching it tightly, tightly as if attempting to squeeze everything to smithereens.

Then.

“.....Eh. I know.....”

## Chapter 5 - Test

It's morning.

At the last stop of her routine dango shop tour, just in front of Wynitt dango shop, Ferris was ascertaining the taste of today's dango.

She brought a stick of red-bean paste dango towards her mouth in anticipation.

Munch, munch, gulp.

“Mmm, today's taste is awesome as expected.”

The shop owner who had had a worried look, standing right behind Ferris, brightened up immediately at her loud declaration.

“Thank goodness. If Ferris-sama were to say so, it is certain that business will be thriving today.”

“Yup. There's no question about it.”

“Well then, I'll set the tea here, please enjoy your meal.”

“Ok.”

Ferris watched the shop owner enter the shop, and took another bite.

Munch, munch, munch, munch, gulp.

“Mmm, delicious!”

Without thinking, she announced loudly again, and then took a sip of tea.

While doing that, she looked up into the sky.

The dango was good, and so was the weather.

Well actually, somewhat earlier, while she was in the midst of her dango tour, the sky turned dark in an instant when it was filled with some large clouds, but for some reason, it was back to normal again.

The sky was currently bright and sunny with not a single cloud in sight.

As she looked at that,

“Hm. It seems like something good will happen today.”

Ferris murmured softly.

*Well now, what should I do today to pass my time?*

She started planning her day's schedule in her head.

As she had already completed the two parts of her daily routine.

Since her return to Roland, her daily routine included the daily training menu prescribed by her brother, as well as the morning dango tour, and both were completed.

The rest of the day was free for her.....

“Hm.”

Ferris pondered.

She couldn't play with Iris today since she was on a mission for Sion.

Then, should she look for Ryner, and as usual, have some fun bullying him?

As she thought about that, her face clouded slightly.

And softly,

“Damn Ryner.”

She murmured.

Recently, Ferris could feel a tinge of anger towards Ryner.

Each time Ferris wanted to take Ryner out for some bullying fun, for some reason, Sion had either a bunch of work for him or a mission to carry out, and as such, he had been too busy to accompany her.....

“..... isn't this boring?”

Ferris murmured discontentedly.

Iris too, under the orders of Sion, was out of the country today.....

“Mu~”

Ferris pouted her lips.

And at that moment, right before her eyes, some strange men were passing by.

She looked at them,

“..... hn?”

Ferris uttered without thinking.

The outfit those men were wearing were exactly the same as that worn by a certain someone whom she was familiar with.

A white armor matching that of Roland, an unusual battle outfit.

A special type of garment entitled only to the mage knights of Roland Empire.....

Something that Ryner always wore.

Additionally, those men who were wearing the outfit of the mage knights, were carrying on their shoulders another man who wore the same outfit, and they were making off at a tremendous pace.

However.

At that moment, Ferris noticed it.

Even though she couldn't make out the details very well, the man who was being carried away looked familiar.

The disarranged black hair that one normally has on waking up, and the lean lanky figure.

“Huh? Are you Ryner?”

But the man who was being carried did not respond to her voice.

It looked like he was unconscious..... or rather, dead.....

At that moment, Ferris stood up.

And,

“Oi, the men there, stop!”

She raised her voice.

But the men appearing to be mage knights did not stop.

The distance between the men and Ferris increased gradually.

“Ku.”

Ferris gripped her sword lying beside her, and started forward, ready to break into a sprint.....

But, as she did that.

“Waittt ~ a minute, beautiful lady. Is it ok for me to ask you a couple questions?”

From behind her, a voice she remembered suddenly rang out.

A voice she had always heard.

That was the voice of Ryner.

Ferris breathed out a small sigh of relief and turned around.

“Well now, for a moment, I thought you were captured or something..... how misleading it.....”

However, her words stopped there.

As the man who was standing right before her ---

“.....”

Was not Ryner.

Right before her eyes, stood a man who was about forty years of age.

He had blond hair, and a set of deep, blue eyes.

And a languid, calm, gentle smile.

But that smile made her feel uneasy.

Despite the fact that he was not Ryner, he gave off an atmosphere of Ryner around him.

The strange man spoke with a soft, gentle voice.

“Ooh. On closer look, you are really a beauty.”

Ferris knitted her eyebrows.

“.....”

*What the heck is this guy.....*

As she paid closer attention, his voice was not really exactly identical to that of Ryner’s.

*But yet, how is it that I would actually mistake this guy’s voice for Ryner?*

“.....what the hell..... are you?”

The man before her grinned,

“Uhn~ is this how you should ask a person of his identity.....”

But he was interrupted,

“Cut the crap and answer.”

Ferris said.

The man shrugged his shoulders mockingly.

That mannerism also somehow resembled Ryner.

*Who the hell is this guy.....*

*Even though he was a completely different person.*

*A different hair color, different eye color, but yet, why does this guy resemble Ryner so much?*

As she was pondering, the man smiled delightfully.

“Are you really that worried?”

He asked suddenly.

While scowling at the man, Ferris began,

“..... what are you talking about?”

The man grinned and pointed his finger to somewhere behind her.

And said.

“What I meant was..... are you really that worried about Ryner?”

In a flash.

Ferris had her sword drawn.

With the edge of the blade held to the man’s neck.

“..... bastard, what did you do to Ryner?”

While saying that, her heart cried out.

That man earlier was indeed Ryner.

And he didn’t respond to Ferris’s voice at all.

*What in the world happened to him?*

*Could it be that.....*

“.....”

But, at that thought, Ferris shook her head slightly. *There is no way, there is no way that he could be done in so easily.....*

At that moment,

“You’re worried?”

The man beamed as he said that.

Ferris firmly increased the pressure of her sword.

“..... if you lay a hand on Ryner, I’ll kill you.”

But the man just got increasingly happy,

“Fufu, so you’re actually that worried.”

“You can drop the act. Who the hell are you? What did you do to.....”

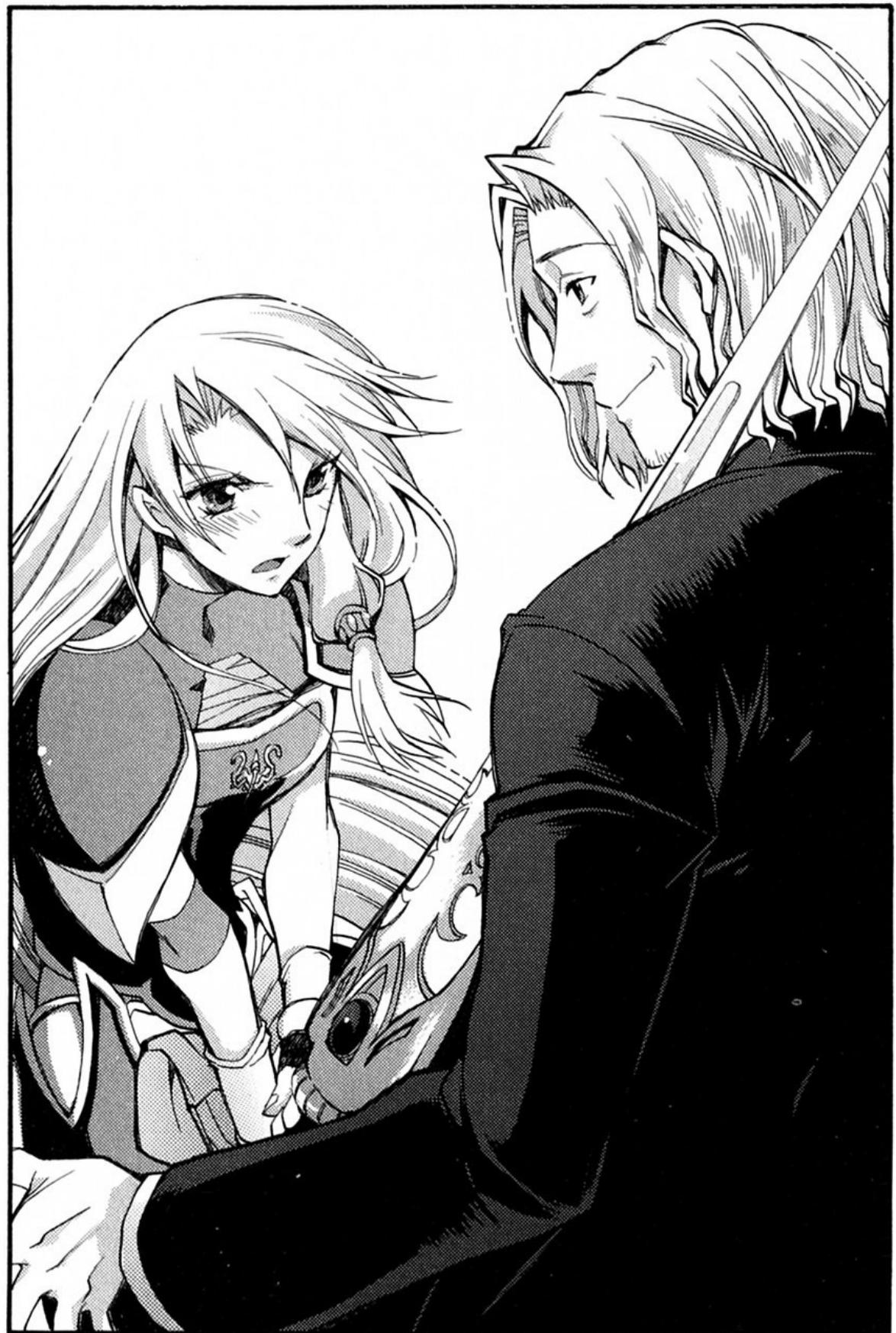
But Ferris’s stopped mid-sentence.

Suddenly.

Because, it was truly a sudden thing when the man started saying something that unthinkable.

While grinning from ear to ear, he said.

“..... you..... you like Ryner, don’t you?”



To those words.

“Wha!?”

Ferris uttered without thinking.

And the man smiled again.

Happily, enjoying himself.

“Ah-hahaha. You like him.”

“Wha, no.....”

“There is certainly no mistake. You’re blushing all over, you can’t hide it anymore eh?”

“Ugh.”

Ferris, once again, looked flustered.

Even though this was not the time for this.

Even though this was an emergency situation, and not the time for this.

With a voice like Ryner’s, with the mannerism that resembled Ryner, the man said.

“So you’re in love with Ryner.”

“..... shut up..... if you continue this meaningless talk any further, I won’t be able to guarantee that you will still be in one piece afterwards.....”

But, at that moment.

“What do you mean by that?”

The man started to reach out for her sword with his bare hand.

Halfway across, his hand started glowing with a blueish-white hue.

In an instant.

*This is bad.*

Ferris thought.

Exactly what was so bad was not clear to her however, all she knew was that something terrible was about to happen.

The man's hand.

The glowing blueish-white hand.

For some reason, that light sent a chill down her spine.....

“Ku.”

Ferris withdrew her sword at once and took one big step backwards. And then, she readjusted her sword stance and scowled at the man.

The man raised his eyebrows in surprise,

“..... woah, not bad. You've noticed that..... hm. To be protected by someone like you, Ryner sure has a nice woman falling for him.....”

However, Ferris did not have the leisure to answer to that.

While scowling at the man, she focused on sharpening the senses of every part of her body.

She had realized this through just that little exchange.

*This fella is outrageously strong.*

*I'll be dead the instant I let my guard down.*

“.....”

While grasping her sword firmly with both her hands, in a ready stance, she lowered her body gradually.

In order to deal with every possible situation, she concentrated her entire consciousness onto her sword.

The man smiled leisurely again.

“That’s right. That’s the way it should be. You’re going to get serious and show me your true strength.”

In response to that, Ferris replied with a quiet voice.

“..... I don’t know what is it that you are after, but if you take me lightly..... it’s death.”

“Hm. For who?”

“Of course.....”

At that moment, Ferris lowered her body even further,

“For you.”

She released all her energy in a burst.

In that instant, she sprung forward towards her opponent.

At a speed that could not be followed with one’s eyes.

With speed as her ally, she swung her sword.

And sliced the man cleanly in two at the waist.....

But, the form of the man who should have been sliced in two, became black smoke and disappeared.

“Wha.....!?”

Ferris frowned.

*A fake?*

*Then, the real body.....*

At that moment, she felt an incoming killing intent from both her left and right directions.

*Both left and right.....?*

*There are two of them?*

But, Ferris did not hesitate. If she got confused for even a moment during a fight, she would die. She ignored the killing intent from her left, and set to counter the one from the right.

She let her sword fly off to the right, towards the source of that killing intent.

“Hahh!”

Sliced apart.

But what was sliced apart was not human.

What was sliced apart, floating in the air, seemed to be some sort of strange-looking red talisman.

“Huh?”

Ferris was stunned.

On top of that, in a queer way, transmitted through her sword arm, it felt like she was stabbing into mud.

The red talisman that was supposed to have been sliced apart dispersed into a fog, and that fog started coiling around her sword.....

“Wha.”

Ferris exclaimed in surprise again.

The sword.....

The sword suddenly became heavy.....

“Ku.....”

Ferris groaned.

*This is bad.*

Her weapon’s movements were readily sealed.

She had absolutely no idea what was happening, except for the fact that the sword was now three times heavier than before. And there was no way, with

her strength, that she could continue wielding it.

Even if she had the strength, it would be considerably difficult to handle the large sword with her slender arm.

Using her own speed and skills, she could give a false impression of faster movements but.....

This weight.....

Furthermore, the killing intent behind her was rising.

*What should I do?*

*Let go of my sword and run away?*

*Or.....*

At that moment, just before the sword was about to completely fall to the ground from that weight,

“Mooovvveee!”

She kicked into it.

With that force, the sword spun around towards her back.

Slashing into the source of the killing intent closing in behind her.

At the same time, Ferris turned around to face her back.

Again, it was a talisman.

Rather, this time round, it was a completely black piece of paper in the shape of a man.

As the sword sliced into that piece of paper.

The sword disappeared.

It completely vanished without a trace.

And Ferris was already,

“.....”

At a loss for words.

*What in the world happened?*

*What is his motive in coming here?*

*Was that some kind of magic?*

*From some unknown country?*

*No, that's not possible.*

*Whichever the country, any kind of magic would require some amount of preparation.*

*Just taking Roland's magic as an example, Ryner has once mentioned that, a magic inscription must first be drawn in order to move the Seirei, thereby after constructing the structure of the spell, an incantation is then used for invocation.*

*That goes the same for magic belonging to Estabul, Iyet, or Nelpha.*

*But, just now, the man didn't seem to have moved his hand in such a manner at all.*

*So what the heck was that?*

*Then, did he prepare those magic in advance.....*

*Unless,*

“..... Heroes' Relics?”

Ferris murmured softly.

*If he has one of those relics that Gastark has in their possession, then my chances of winning.....*

At that moment.

Right before Ferris's eyes.

The sand from the ground swirled up and took the shape of a man.

It was that same man who resembled Ryner.

It was as if the man had seen through all of Ferris's thoughts and he smiled.

"Nope. This isn't any Heroes' Relic. It's just magic."

"....."

*Magic.*

*That's what the man had said.*

*It's just magic.*

Ferris squinted her eyes.

*What did he meant by 'it's just magic'?*

She had never seen anything like that before.

Even though Ryner could deploy his magic with an overwhelming speed, she was still able to disrupt him.

But for this fella, she had no clue as to what had happened. In other words, what he used was not 'just magic'.

However, neither was it a Heroes' Relic according to him.

*Then, what is it?*

*Am I under some kind of illusion?*

*Where the hell is the seed to his trick.....*

Her thoughts went no further.

The man waved his hand.

"Aemi, Lason"

As he chanted some undecipherable words, the man-shape black piece of paper, which had disappeared with the sword earlier reappeared, and then

split open.

At the same time.

Ferris's sword appeared suddenly, and the man caught hold of it.

"Hoi. Your sword, I'll be taking this~"

On saying that, the man turned the sword round.

That very scene.

"....."

Ferris felt despair welling up.

*What was all that.....*

*If that.....*

If that was not a Relic, but magic according to him..... then it seemed like it's impossible to oppose him.

What he's showing her right now could not have been possible in reality.

If he needed only a word to activate his magic, then no matter how fast she was, it would be activated before she reached him.

*The chances of winning.....*

At that moment, the man smiled again.

"They're zero, that is, your chances of winning."

Once again, it was as if he had read her mind.....

Ferris shook.

*This is bad.*

*Compared to other opponents I've met, this guy.....*

*What have I been doing? For me to have made a mistake in reading this guy's strength.....*

*I have to escape.*

*For now, I have to get out of this place.....*

But, at that thought, the man continued.

“And now, you are thinking of running away. I can see your muscles tensing up in preparation for escape. That is wise. What an incredible amount of talent. Your instincts, ability to make judgements, speed, strength..... I have no complaints about them. There is only one more thing remaining..... regarding the matter that you are his kin..... well, I shall decide with the last test..... now.”

The man lifted his hand.

And said.

One word.

**“IZUCHI”**

Instantly.

A magic inscription suddenly appeared before his hand, and a flash of lightning was unleashed.

“Wha-!”

Ferris promptly dived to the side and dodged it.

Thereafter, the place where Ferris was at a moment ago exploded on being struck by lightning.

That place.

Ferris could only look at it with a stunned expression.

“.....”

*What, what the hell is he.....*

*Impossible.*

Something that should have been impossible had just happened.

The magic invoked by the man was one that Ferris was well familiar with.

It was **Izuchi**. A magic that Ryner used often.

Roland's magic.

A magic that is invoked by drawing a magical inscription, followed by an incantation.....

*That guy used only one word to invoke it.*

*It was not an illusion.*

*And neither was it a Relic.*

*This fella is really capable of invoking magic in an instant.....*

“..... what the hell are you.....”

Ferris said with a strained voice.

The man smiled wryly.

“Now, now, that's a line I wanted to say..... there are not many ladies who could dodge an **IZUCHI** invoked using the ‘true word’ method.”

He shrugged.

“Well, but then again, I've purposely slowed down its speed to something that I thought matched yours. With that, you should be well aware of the difference in our strength? You have no chance of winning against me. That is something definite.”

The man said.

And that was the truth. If she had not put her guard up and paid attention to his hand, Ferris would have been struck.

Everything would have been finished.

She would have been killed.

“.....”

*Got to escape.*

*Not that I have confidence in getting away from this monster.....*

But still, he was not an opponent whom she could fight.

The man lifted his hand again.

And Ferris tensed up her whole body.

*The next time.*

*The next time he invoke his magic, I will make a break for it.*

The man opened his mouth.

About to fire off..... his magic.....

But, at that moment.

“..... oh yeah. I almost forgot to tell you..... just a while ago..... I killed Ryner.”

The man said suddenly.

At those words.

Ferris,

“.....”

Said nothing.

Rather, she didn't understand the man's words.

*Just now, what did this man say?*

Nevertheless, the man continued.

“I stabbed a knife into his chest and killed him. Blood was spurting everywhere, and he had a pathetic look on his face.”

He said it in a pleased manner.

Then Ferris started,

“..... liar.....”

She said softly.

She couldn’t say anything else.

*It couldn’t be so.*

*It couldn’t have been..... Ryner couldn’t have been killed so easily.....*

However, in her head, the scene she saw earlier surfaced.

The mage knights were carrying someone who looked like Ryner.

*He didn’t respond even when I called out to him.....*

*It was as if he was unable to respond at all.....*

*But, that’s not possible.....*

At that moment, the man went on further.

“You saw it yourself earlier, didn’t you? Ryner’s body.....”

Ferris said again,

“..... liar. You’re lying.....”

“Nope. I’m not lying. Ryner’s dead. You should be well aware of that right?”

“.....”

Then.

Then..... her head..... went blank.

She did not know what was happening anymore.

*What.*

*What was this guy saying?*

*Why.*

*My chest.....*

*No way.*

*I don't..... want something like that.*

*Something like that.....*

*Ryner.*

*Ryner, no longer around.....*

*Something like that.....*

“..... ah, arg..... argh.....”

Confusion.

She lost her calm.

Her voice.....

Her head hurt terribly.

Her tears.....

“Oops, I made her cry.”

The man said jestingly.

And then, Ferris began,

“..... I'm going to kill you.....”

“It's impossible for you.”

“.....you bastard, I'm going to kill you.....”

“As I've said, that's not possible. In the first place, what do you intend to do?

Our strengths are way too far apart. You have no weapon. Your heart is in confusion. In your current state, what can you do to me? Aren't you a child who can make proper judgements? When it's time to run, you run..... that should be what he had taught you. Now, run. If you come after me now, it's a suicidal act."

*Suicidal act.*

*That's right.*

*It'll be a suicidal act if I don't get out of here.*

*If I don't get out of here.*

That was what she was taught.

But yet.

“.....”

Ferris started running.

She ran towards the man unarmed.

She threw a punch.

“..... die!”

She yelled.

The man smiled again.

With a sad, and yet happy face.

He readily caught hold of Ferris's hand. And punched her in the stomach,

“Ah.....”

That was the only thing she uttered.

Her knees bent over. And her consciousness started to fade away.

Before losing her consciousness completely, she heard that voice again.

Ryner's voice.

Rather, it was a voice which sounded like Ryner.

“..... you've passed the test. Sorry for having you go through all this. Since..... you're able to go that far for him, I shall bestow a power unto your blade..... a power to sever darkness. Please..... protect h.....”

That was all.

That was all Ferris heard before she slipped into unconsciousness.



In the depths of his consciousness.

Dark, red, in the depths of his consciousness.

Deep within his heart.

Passing through the red corridor, Ryner finally arrived at the innermost part.

“.....”

It was a strange place.

A huge amount of space.....

But everything was red.

The sky, the ground, everything was red..... the ground felt like somebody's innards.

Ryner stood there,

“..... somehow..... it feels disgusting.”

While saying that, he looked around at his surroundings.

But everything in his field of vision was red, red, red.

Everything in his sight was in the color of blood.

“..... somehow, it makes me feel dizzy.....”

Ryner gripped his own head for a while. That was when he noticed his abnormal hands.

There were black words wrapped around his hands, his white hands in fact.....

He looked at them,

“..... meh, I don’t get what’s going on anymore.....”

He shrugged.

He had been complying with the voice from the sky and passed through the corridor to reach the innermost portion.

With regards to his situation, he could not tell what was happening at all.

Getting killed by a stab into his chest from a knife..... while he was still wondering about that, he appeared in this strange place unknown to him..... his body was white as well, he was wrapped around with strange black words as well..... and on top of that, **Alpha Stigma**’s voice came from the sky..... *well, the owner of the voice couldn’t be Alpha Stigma, he’s more like a god or a hero I guess, well, forget it, I’ll just refer to him as Alpha Stigma.....*

“Ugh, I shouldn’t be thinking of all that..... so now, what’s going to happen to me?”

That’s the question before him right now.

He looked around again.

At the space which resembled a person’s innards.

And facing the space,

“..... o~i. I followed your instructions and passed through the corridor~. What should I do next~?”

Ryner said.

But the answer was,

“.....”

Nothing.

He frowned.

“Ehhh~! Excuse me, this is kind of unbecoming, isn’t it~? Ignoring me after all that, you are terrible, don’t you think? If you continue bullying me, I’m really going to go home ok?”

As expected, there was no answer.

“..... hm..... well, then again..... I don’t know how to find my way back though.....”

Ryner had a disappointed look.

“..... is that it? Should I go even further than this?”

As he said that, he took a step forward.

Out of the corridor.

Towards the place which resembled a person’s innards.

As his foot touched the ground..... it felt like he stepped on something soft and mushy.....

“Ugh..... is this for real?”

Ryner’s frown increasingly deepened.

In that manner, he took another step forward and another, moving forward.

Continuing endlessly on the red ground.

A completely red sky.

From that sky,

<< Aah. Aah..... >>

The voice resounded again.

<< Aah..... aah..... this day..... this day..... how long have I waited for it.....

>>

The voice came from the sky.

And Ryner looked up at the sky.

If it were as usual, there would not be anything there.

Only an empty sky with a voice resounding from it.

However this time round.....

In the sky.

The sky above.

There was a beast hanging.

“.....”

Well, rather than a beast, it's features might be closer to that of a human.

But that was nothing human.

It was evidently not a human being.

It had skin that was redder than blood.

And the eyes were even much redder.

In those eyes, were the vermillion five-pointed pentacles.

Sharp teeth.

Sharp claws.

And wings.

Everything was red.

A monster.

Looking at that form, one could only describe it as a monster.....

Ryner said with half-opened eyes.

“..... hey you, are the owner of that voice?”

The beast looked at him.

Using its devilish red pentacle-filled, sharp eyes.

It opened its large mouth ---

And then.

<< Fu..... ha..... ah..... ah ha  
ha  
ha  
ha ha ha ha  
haaa  
aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa >>

Laughing madly.

Laughing madly.

With a howl that seemed to shake the world.

Ryner, to that voice,

“..... gu.”

He felt like shrinking his body.

From deep within his body, arose a feeling that flooded throughout his whole body.

That was..... fear.

It was fear.

Ryner was afraid of this voice.

With an unbelievably overwhelming pressure.

If this thing was called a god, he might possibly accept it.

That was the amount of power inside it.

The pressure from the voice seemed to be able to crush him.

He covered his ears involuntarily.

But there was no meaning to that. He could already sense it.

This thing ---

This thing is some kind of special existence ---

The laughter stopped.

It seemed like it was satisfied. And he turned his head.

It spread its wings.....

And descended from the sky.

It descended in an upside-down manner, and as it was on the verge of

reaching the ground, it stopped, as if it was unaffected by gravity.

Remaining in that upside-down position, the monster walked slowly towards him.

Ryner began,

“..... duh, if you can float in the air, there is no need for wings eh.....”

With a shrill voice, he poked fun at it.

As he said that, a smile floated on the monster's face.

<< ..... aah..... you're right..... I thought they were always getting in the way..... these restraining things..... >>

And then, with a stiff motion, it turned its body around.

<< Fu, fufufu..... but this is pretty much a cliche thing..... is this how demons appear to you humans?..... fufu, haha..... not having known real demons, this is the sham that I was sealed in..... >>

Once again, it looked at Ryner with its vermillion pentacle eyes.

<< ..... however, this is the end. If I devour you..... this **Seal** would be undone..... I am called **Alpha**. Everything is going according to the contract..... >>

At those words.

Ryner took a step backward.

“..... devour me? Ehh, uh-oh..... isn't this indeed..... developing along a

pretty bad direction?”

His face stiffened.

*Hello, excuse me, where is this heading to eh?*

*Devour me to return to your original form?*

*What is this all about?*

**The Seal, Alpha, Contract, and there is still the Door, the Key..... I don't get what's going on at all.**

*What the hell am I doing here?*

*What am I here for?*

At that moment,

<< Disappear, **Solver of All Equations** >>

The monster extended its claws.

And it headed straight towards Ryner.

“Woah, seriously!? Wait..... aah shit, am I going to fight with such a monster?”

He started deploying his magic at high speed.....

Deploying at high speed.....

“.....”

Nothing!?

There was no glow and it seemed like his magic could not be activated.

“Uwah, why's that?”

The monster's claws started to close in.

Thrusting straight towards Ryner's chest.....

There was a scream.

Only a scream was heard.

<<

Gaargh!?

From the monster.

“..... huh? Eh? Why? What the heck is going on?”

Without knowing anything, that was the only thing Ryner could say.

During that time, the monster's claws should have bored into Ryner's chest but, it continued to scream.

When Ryner looked at the claws of the monster.....

For some reason, the black words surrounding Ryner just now, were coiled around the monster's arm, and started constricting it.

While the monster grimaced in pain, it withdrew its arm.

<< You, you filth..... Ar, Artofaal?..... ku, kuku, ha ha, ha ha ha ha ha ha..... the curse of a lesser deity..... I've never thought I would need to guard against that..... >>

After saying that, the monster took its arm, now wrapped by the words,..... and bit into it.

<< Disappear, Artofa..... >>

But.

Its voice stopped there.

Since the monster's head exploded all of a sudden.

“..... huh?”

As Ryner exclaimed in surprise, the headless monster's knees bent over and took a kneeling position with a ‘ga-kun’ sound.

And lay completely motionless.

Ryner began,

“..... erm..... eh? Are you dead?”

There was no reaction despite Ryner calling out to him.

“..... oi, o-i?”

“.....”

However, there was no reaction.

Ryner looked at his surroundings again.

At the space that was strangely stained with red.

He was all alone in the midst of all that.

“..... erm..... so what should I do next?”

As he was asking that,

“..... hurry.”

A reply was head.

It was the voice of a woman.

“Erm? Who is it this time?”

Then,

“..... hurry up, Ryner.”

It was the woman’s voice again.

But this time round, he knew where the voice was coming from.

The voice came from the kneeling, headless monster.....

“..... errrm..... did you just say that?”

As Ryner was asking the monster.

The monster’s chest split open with an unpleasant sound, and a person’s hand came out.

It was a woman’s hand smeared with blood.

Ryner started,

“..... scary!?”

He instinctively moved backwards.

But the hand that was smeared with blood squished about, appearing to be asking for help.....

Furthermore, another splitting sound was heard again, and another of the woman’s hand broke out of the monster’s body.

It was a gory sight.

“..... ugh..... now, what’s up with this place.....”

*Is this some kind of blood orgy?*

He could not understand what was going on.

There was too much he didn’t know about, and on the contrary, it felt laughable.

In the first place, he didn’t know where this place was, he was attacked by a monster, that monster’s head exploded, and from the monster’s body, two hands smeared with blood.....

“..... erm..... could it be that all this is a dream? All because of that stupid Sion working me excessively, and as a result, due to the tiredness, I’m having a nightmare right now..... if that’s the case, I’ll be happy if I could wake up earlier.....”

At the same time when he said that.

The monster’s shoulder burst open, and a woman’s head, with long black hair, smeared with blood, came out of the shoulder.....

“..... ugh..... erm..... I’m really bad with scary stuff, please let me wake up fast.....”

But, at that moment.

“.....ah.”

Ryner stopped mid-sentence.

For some reason, the woman who appeared out of the monster’s body, somehow seemed familiar to him.

“.....”

She’s familiar.

That’s right, Ryner had indeed seen this woman before.

The black, supple hair that was currently stained with blood.

Beautiful long eyelashes.

Below her soft nose, nicely shaped lips.

Every feature was familiar to Ryner.

“.....you, you.....”

But he could not remember who she was.

Even though he should have seen her before. Even though he should have known who she was.

But yet, for some reason, he could not remember who she was.

Even though his mind and his body were telling him otherwise.

*I know this woman, that's what my whole body is telling me.*

*This woman.*

*This woman is someone I love.....*

“..... you are.....”

His body shook.

*What is this feeling?*

It was an extremely nostalgic feeling, and his chest tightened.

“..... who are you?”

The woman opened her eyes. And looked at him.

Black eyes.

Her gentle gaze seemed capable of forgiving everything.

And Ryner

And Ryner knew all that.

And yet.....

He could not remember however hard he tried.

Ryner gripped at his own chest.

*My chest hurts.*

*What's this?*

*What the hell is this.....*

“..... how, are you..... how are you related to me?”

The woman smiled.

She stretched out her arms.

“..... come closer.”

She said.

Normally, he would not get any closer. Such a strange scene it was. It should not be normal for him to listen to the words of a woman who came out of a monster that just attacked him.

But yet,

“..... please..... come closer. Let me touch you, Ryner.”

At those words.

He seemed to have lost his senses.

The sound, ‘Ryner’, that was heard from the woman’s lips.

He had heard that before. Rather, it seemed like he had longed for that sound for a long time.

“.....”

Ryner took a staggering step forward.

Then, the woman touched Ryner’s head with her hand.

His forehead, his eyes, his nose, his cheeks, his lips.

And finally, she embraced his head.

“..... you’ve grown..... you’ve grown up to be such a big boy.....”

The woman’s hands were kind and gentle.

When the woman stroked his head, Ryner was at a loss for words.

He could no longer think of anything else.

The woman continued stroking Ryner’s black hair.

“..... I’ve been waiting all this while. In order to meet you..... all this while,  
all this while.....”

“..... in order to meet me?”

The woman nodded at Ryner’s query.

“All this while.”

“..... here?”

“Yes.”

“From within this monster?”

“.....”

The woman said nothing.



But Ryner continued. Looking at the woman's face. It was a nostalgic face. But yet, he could not remember anything.

*What in the world.....*

"Who are you?"

Ryner asked.

But she laughed sadly at that.

"I can't tell you."

"Why?"

"..... because of the contract."

Ryner frowned. And moved away from the woman.

"..... again..... again, contract. The monster then, and now you too, kept talking about a contract, contract, contract..... what is this all about? Who made a contract with what?"

At his question, the woman's face became sad.

That face, for some reason, seemed to be tearing at Ryner's heart.

*This isn't it.*

*The face I wanted to see is not such a face.*

*What I wanted to see.....*

"..... what the heck is this....."

Ryner spitted.

"Why..... why am I feeling this..... who are you? Why is that I..... want to see..... you smile so much.....?"

At his words.

At the reply from Ryner, the woman smiled.

A blissful smile, it was.

And then.

“..... I love you, Ryner.”

She said suddenly.

“With just you and Lieral around, just that alone will fill me utmost happiness.”

*Lieral..... Lieral.*

His head hurt again at that name. He knew that. He knew that name as well. But yet, he could not remember.....

*Why? It should have been something important but yet.....*

But the woman continued.

“I love you, Ryner. That’s why, don’t lose sight of yourself. Please don’t think of yourself as an unneeded human being. It would be fine. Everything will definitely go well..... I’ll, I’ll protect you.....”

At that moment.

<< Gugyagaguagakaaa

laaa  
aaaaaaa >>

The voice descended again.

The head of the monster which had exploded, which should have been destroyed, sprung up again, and was howling.

<< For one of sacrificial standing, how dare you, how dare you, how dare

you how dare you how dare you how dare you how dare you how dare you  
how dare you how dare you how dare you how dare you >>

The monster opened its mouth, and brought its sharp teeth towards the woman's neck.....

"Wait! Stop!"

Ryner shouted.

"Stop, please! Please....."

However.

'Zaku'(SFX).....

The monster bit into the woman's head.

Blood flowing.

Red blood.

It was that red again.

That cursed red.....

Ryner, having seen that,

"....."

He couldn't move.

The woman was eaten by the monster right before him.

All this while, she was facing Ryner, smiling at him.

"..... I'm sorry..... we only have such a short amount of time together..... but, even so, I was happy..... I have to thank Lieral..... for keeping his promise to me..... the promise of letting me meet Ryner again."

Ryner began,

“..... I’m going to save you now.....”

The woman shook her head.

And she smiled again.

“..... I’ll..... be fine. That aside, you have to hurry. Before **The Weaver of All Equations** comes..... further up..... towards the door..... touch that door.”

“What are you talking about.....”

“Just listen, quickly. I’m using Artfaal’s power that Lieral bounded to me to suppress this fellow, but..... it won’t last.....”

Her words stopped.

The devouring continued on.

The head, the head.....

However, she stretched her remaining hand towards him.

“..... I wanted..... to touch you more. I wanted to tell you more..... about how much I love you. I wanted to be by your side..... and watch you grow.....”

But.

Her voice..... stopped.

The whole head had been eaten up by the monster.

Only the hand was remaining.

“.....”

Ryner,

“.....”

Could do nothing.

Except for holding that hand gently.

As he did that, her hand clasped Ryner's hand, and he returned her grip firmly.

And with one of her fingers,

*Go.*

She commanded him.

Onward.

Ryner looked in the direction the finger was pointing to.

And not knowing from where it appeared, he saw a door.

Rather, it was there all along. But because it was too big, he couldn't tell what it was initially.

It was a red wall which resembled innards.....

The wall which seemed to reach the sky was the door.

As he looked at it with a racing pulse, Ryner said.

“All I have to do is to touch that?”

On saying that, the finger made a *Go* motion again.

“Alright, I understand..... so, I..... I’ll get going.”

Then.

He could tell that the finger was shaking.

It was again the *Go* signal.....

This time round, the order was not as forceful as before.

For some reason, Ryner understood her feelings just by seeing that.

He knew what she was thinking.

*Go..... Please don’t go..... Don’t leave me here alone.....*

Without thinking, Ryner clasped that hand.

As he did that, her hand held his, as if seeking for help.

That hand was shaking.

From fear, from loneliness.....

*I want to save her.*

He wanted to save this woman.

That was what he thought.

*I want to save her..... and return home with her..... don't make such a sad face, let's laugh together.....*

*If we could do that, everything will definitely turn out fine.*

That was what he felt.

But yet.

Once more, that hand thrust Ryner away.

Telling him to go.

The hand that was being devoured.

The hand that was shaking.

With that hand that was shaking from fear, she was telling him to go.

Then,

“.....”

Then, Ryner,

“..... uu.”

Started running.

That was goodbye.

Leaving behind the woman who was being devoured..... Ryner moved forward.

“..... shit..... shit.”

He felt sick.

He was sick of himself.

Everything was turning unpleasant.

*What's up with this?*

*What's up with this place!?*

*Why do I have to go through all this?*

*What in the world,*

“..... what in the world is it that I am supposed to accomplish!?”

Ryner ran.

The words kept circling in his head.

**Door, Sacrifice, Memory, Seal, Alpha, Key, Contract, Solver of All Equations, Weaver of All Equations.**

“.....”

He understood none of those.

Understood completely nothing.

Even though that's the case, for now, he had to run.

If only he could get out of this place.

As long as he could turn this shitty situation around, anything was good.

Ryner ran.

Towards the door.

It was just a few steps away.

At that moment,

<< I won't allow this. You are supposed to be my sacrifice here. >>

The monster shouted.

Having completely devoured the woman, the monster started moving.

But Ryner did not turn around.

With set determination, he continued running towards the door.

Just a little more.

He stretched his hand.

Door.

The door.....

His finger first..... touched it.

At that instant.

He could see it.

It was a strange sight.

Everything was in black and white.....

It was if he was in a fairy-tale picture book where the scene was a drawn picture.

In the middle of that scene, there was a man holding a sword.

He had black armour.

Like trailing smoke in the wind, the form of the man clad in the strange armour kept changing.

He was crying.

Appearing to be greatly saddened by something, tears flowed non-stop from his eyes.

However, embedded within his eyes was not sadness.

A strong will.

A strong determination.

And he lifted his sword.

And thrust.

“.....”

The first was a woman.

An extremely beautiful woman.

A dazzlingly beautiful divinity.

Goddess.

That's right, she must be a goddess.

He killed that goddess.

While weeping, he killed the goddess.

One.

Two.

Three.

Four.

While killing, his tears dried up.

A smile floated on the man's lips.

Five.

Six.

Seven.

Eight.

Blood, the scene was filled with blood.

Blood, the world was filled with blood.

That was all of the goddesses.

All of them in this world.

And everything ended.

The world had ended.

He knew that.

Argh, it was hopeless.

He knew that it was already too late for anything and everything.

And the world ended.

But the man did not stop.

He continued killing.

Killing every single living being, every single world, he continued on, dirtying himself with blood.

The black and white scene was covered in black.

It was the colour of blood.

All this black was from the colour of blood.

And then he realized it.

The armour the man was wearing --- was not black.

It was.

It was..... armor made up of blood.

An armor of squirming blood.

The man continued weeping.

And cutting away with his sword.

No one could stop him.

Only cutting away.

Only cutting away.

That was it.

All his important things turned to nothing.

He only had his strength.

Because of being the chosen one.

Because he was the chosen one.

Chosen by the world, by everything, by the gods, the legendary ---

“Ha..... haha..... hahaha..... hahahaha.....!?”

The man, while weeping, continued swinging his sword.

His grief disappeared.

His despair disappeared.

Cutting away.

Cutting away.

His love disappeared as well.

His joy disappeared as well.

He was drowned in his strength.

And in the end.

At the end of everything.

He pointed his sword towards here.....

“.....”

He was saying something.

While weeping, he wanted to say something.

“.....”

But nothing could be heard.

Nothing could be heard at all.

*What is it?*

*What do you want to tell me?*

Even though as he asked.....

“.....”

His voice could not reach him.

The man was desperately calling out to him, but his voice could not reach him at all.

*What is it?*

*What is it that you want to tell me so much?*

Then,

“..... lp m..... he..... me.....please.....”

Frantically.

While weeping.

The man was calling out.

But still, he could not be heard.

No matter how much he strained his ears, he could hear almost nothing.

His voice ---

*His cries for help --- I did not manage to hear them well.*

He was weeping.

He continued to weep.

Then,

“..... stop..... I..... want..... you.....”

While shaking, he raised his sword high up.....

And said.

“..... I want to..... devour you.”

And he swung his sword downwards.

Towards here.

*At my head.*

Instantly.

“.....”

He saw it.

Ryner saw it.

The receiving end of the edge of the blade, was himself.

The figure of himself crying that he did not want to die.

The figure of himself being betrayed by someone he loved.

The figure of himself being killed by someone he trusted.

And then.

The figure of himself, desiring love, crying..... a figure that was no longer human, a grotesque looking figure ---

The figure of a demon.

## **Chapter 6: About the last moment of peace**

Pain.

A slight pain.

“...”

That sense of pain made him open his eyes.

So what entered his eyes was a bright light. A light that was so bright that it made him scrunch up his brow unconsciously.

“...”

Sunlight.

Yes, it was sunlight.

Ryner Lute raised his eyes to look at the sunlight shining in brightly, narrowing his eyes.

“.....Is it day break...?”

He slowly sat up.

Then he looked around.

He found that he was in a familiar setting. This was one of the rooms of a cheap inn that he had stayed in once.

A room with only a wooden bedframe and table, and a small cupboard.

Maybe he forgot to close the window last night when he was sleeping? The thin curtains flapped gently in the wind, the whole curtain flew up.

So, the sunlight would shine on Ryner's face.

“...”

Ryner looked out of the window for a while.

Saying that he was looking out of the window, but this was the second floor,

the scenery was not that good anyway...

Then, he pressed a hand to his head. He felt a slight headache. He still was not very conscious.

Was it because of the strong sunlight shining on him in the midst of his deep sleep, waking him up in the middle of it?

Or.

“...Or is it caused by that dream that made me very unhappy?”

Saying that, Ryner sighed lightly.

The dream.

That unpleasant dream.

The feeling that he had when he woke up made him feel uncomfortable.

His consciousness was not completely clear yet.

Besides that, he could not even remember how he had fallen asleep yesterday.

He only remembered.

He remembered after working with Sion through the night, he was in the process of returning home with unsteady steps...

He was attacked by a strange person...

No, that was a dream too?

He was really tired, so he could fall asleep at any moment? He was not clear on what time he had woken up.

His memory was strange.

“.....That dream.....was a dream, right?”

He muttered that, in a moment.

“...It hurts.”

Ryner felt a slight ache in his chest, and could not help but scrunch up his face.

So he pressed his chest that ached.

His left chest.

It was coincidentally the area where his heart was.

A pain that felt itchy, and also a tight feeling.

He looked at his chest.

Then he discovered—

“.....Damn it.....Don’t tell me it’s not a dream?”

Ryner said as if groaning.

His chest area.

The battle attire that consisted of a combination of a robe and white armour that only Mage Knights could wear.

The area around his left chest that was covered by the white armour—something strange had happened to the armour around his heart.

The chest portion of the armour had signs of seeming to dissolve as if someone using a strong heat source, and a hole appeared there.

“.....Hey hey, this isn’t a joke right...”

Ryner could not help but say in surprise.

It was a truly abnormal scene.

This white armour should be constructed using a metal called Charoio metal.

This Charoio metal was a strong metal that was constructed with high-quality magic, and only for the Mage Knights...

The special property of this metal was simply stated as this—

Light, durable, no holes, would not contort.

Heat resistant.

“.....”

It was even more outstanding in its property of being heat resistant, presently the offense magic that could create the largest amount of heat, used in Roland could not even handle this armour.

A sword like Ferris's could probably break or pierce through this armour, but this metal would definitely not melt.

Once this metal was formed, it should definitely not melt.

This armour had that special property.

This white armour would definitely not be affected by the high temperature...

“...It actually melted...”

Ryner used his finger to touch his chest...

Then.

“...”

He was momentarily speechless.

Witnessing this scene that could not happen, the mind that had been unclear since he got up finally started to move.

“...This is really complicating things.”

The situation was a little abnormal.

Even if the magic of a country anywhere had the power to melt this armour, once struck by the heat from the magic, before the armour melted and had a hole appear in it, at least—

“...I would have become a pile of ash...”

But the present situation was not as such.

No, in truth, I have already become a pile of ash, and I am presently existing in a incorporeal form, only that I did not discover that myself—if that is so then this would be a different matter...

“...I probably didn’t die?”

Saying that, Ryner stared at his hands, attempting to open and close them.

So, his hands followed his will and moved accordingly, it did not seem ghostly.

“...Ugh. Ah, at least I probably am not a ghost?”

Ugh, he initially did not think that things like ghosts really existed.

But, speaking of which, what is going on?”

“...What happened to me?”

Saying that, he started to attempt recalling it again.

On the way back from Sion’s place.

Two people attacked Ryner.

According to what he remembered, it should be them who burned a hole in this armour.

And using only a dagger, easily burning it.

At that time blood had spurted out of his chest, he completely did not notice that the armour had melted...

Their actions were really unthinkable.

They had easily melted an armour that should definitely not melt, burning a hole through it, but although such a high temperature was reached, Ryner was not turned into a pile of ashes...

And, that dagger had plunged into Ryner’s chest, blood had spurted out, he should have died a long time ago.

“.....”

From the amount of blood that had flowed out, it was clear that he had suffered a mortal injury.

Having that much blood flowing out, it could not be possible that he was still alive.

Right, I should be already dead.

I should have died.

“.....But, why am I still alive?”

Ryner said with a confused expression.

Then, he stuck a finger into the hole opened in the armour on his chest, probing the interior.

The hole went through the clothes beneath the armour, reaching Ryner's body.

Since he had bled that much, then it was expected that the hole reached his body.

But, there were no wounds on his chest.

He had clearly bled so much, that area had no wound.

“.....”

But, the feeling at the chest area where Ryner had been stabbed was comparably quite...

“.....What is this?”

Ryner tilted his head in suspicion.

There was a strange feeling to the skin on his chest as if he had touched metal or something.

It was extremely cold.

Although the surface area was very small, but he could confirm that that was not the feeling of skin, and it had turned into something.

“...Hey hey, what is it this time?”

Ryner quickly took off his battle uniform.

Then he stripped off his shirt, looking at his chest.

A strange crest was etched there... no, he should say that it was something like words.

It was coincidentally at the portion where his heart was.

Small black words that were roughly the same size as the two fingers.

Ryner saw that, smiling bitterly.

“...It can’t be...”

He said.

Because Ryner remembered this text.

It was in the dream.

It was the same as the words that he had seen in the nightmare he had just now.

The black words that had surrounded Ryner’s body.

Those black text that had gripped the arm of the monster.

“...That means—”

Ryner muttered with a trembling voice.

That means, don’t tell me—

Don’t tell me—

“.....That strange dream.....was real?”

Impossible.

That sort of thing was impossible.

Because, that...

Shouldn't happen in real life...

“.....Could it?”

Saying that, he tried to open his “eyes” wider.

Eyes.

Ryner’s eyes.

The cursed Alpha Stigma.

As long as he opened his eyes bigger, a red five-pointed star would appear in the middle of his eyes, and start to glow.

The place where this Alpha Stigma monster resided in.

That place—

“.....That wasn’t a dream.....?”

Ryner said with a tired voice.

That was not a dream.

That world.

That monster.

The woman that he was unable to rescue and had abandoned...

That wasn’t a dream...?

“.....Ugh.”

Ryner thought.

He couldn’t help but press his chest.

He felt that his chest ached. But, that sort of pain wasn’t due to his wound, and it wasn’t caused by the strange words.

He only felt that there was a strong ache inside his chest.

The woman that he had abandoned.

He thought of the woman who had been eaten by the monster before him, his chest and head ached strongly.

“.....Oh no.....”

Ryner breathed out slowly.

He was already confused.

What had happened to him?

Who was that woman?

He should know her. He definitely should know her, but... every time he tried to remember, his head started to ache viciously.

“.....Ah, damn it!! What is it!”

Ryner pressed a hand to his head.

Every time he attempted to remember, his head would hurt.

He clearly wanted to remember. He clearly wanted to know who she was.

But every time he attempted to remember, his head would ache.

That voice as well.

The voice of that person who stabbed Ryner's chest. The voice that made his chest feel tight, strangely feeling extremely nostalgic. He should have heard that person's voice. He should know him too.

But, he could not remember. Every time he tried to remember, his head would start to hurt.

As if there was something deliberately obstructing him.

As if a curse or something had been cast on him, to prevent him from remembering...

At this moment.

“...Eh?”

Ryner seemed to have remembered something, raising an eyebrow.

“.....A curse.....Has a spell been cast on me?”

At this moment he remembered.

In the dream...

No, that probably wasn't a dream, but, anyway, he remembered that in that strange world, the words that that woman had said.

When Ryner asked the woman “*who are you?*”, she had said those words.

“*I cannot answer your question.*”

Why? – Ryner asked. So she had replied:

“*...Because that was stated in the contract.*”

Contract.

Contract...

“...Is that the spell sealing my memories...?”

Ryner muttered.

But, what was the contract made for? Who is that woman? Why is there a need to seal the memories?

“.....”

But, Ryner couldn't understand the reason behind this.

He only knew, he had seemed to become involved in something strange.

“...No, I was involved in it since I was born?”

Saying that, Ryner laughed lightly as if mocking himself.

That dream...

The dream of the strange world, where everything was blood-red.

That was probably—

“.....Inside me. Inside my eyes.....Inside Alpha Stigma...”

The place that he always wanted to go to.

The place that he was always searching for.

The place that could give him leads to the answers on who he was.

But, why did he suddenly go to a place like that?

“...How did I get to that place? Because I was on the verge of death?”

But, Ryner gave a negative response to the question he raised.

No.

It wasn't like that.

Approaching death... He had a few experiences like that in the past. The time when he was the gloomy “Hidden Elite” department of Roland... He had received mortal injuries because he failed in his mission. And he had once spent several months walking along the boundary between life and death.

But, he had not reached that place.

It wasn't because he was close to dying that he had reached that place.

Then, why was he able to reach that place this time?

“...”

At this moment, Ryner looked at his chest.

The black words that were embedded in his chest.

He stared at those words.

“...It was the owner of the voice who killed me, did he bring me there?”

It was probably like that.

He could tell some things from what the woman in the dream said.

In the dream, she mentioned "*I have to thank him*". Thank him for fulfilling his promise. Thank him for letting me meet Ryner...

She had said that.

The person she was grateful to was probably the owner of that voice?

And she mentioned the name of the person she had to thank.

Yes. Ryner heard her mention the name of the voice's owner.

He should know that name.

He remembered that his name was...

".....Ugh."

At this moment, his head started to ache again.

But, Ryner didn't stop pondering about it.

What was the name of that voice's owner?

What had she said then?

So Ryner recalled.

The words she had said at that time.

*"As long as I have you and " ", I feel very blessed."*

*"...I'm sorry... I can only interact with you for such a short time... But, even so, I am very happy... I feel thankful to " "... I am thankful that he fulfilled our promise... I am grateful that he let me see Ryner."*

This memory—

“...Wow, I really completely forgot it...”

Ryner said with a tone as if he felt uninterested.

His memories had been completely wiped.

Only that portion had been utterly and completely wiped away.

He completely couldn't remember it.

But, he knew something because of this.

Judging from the words of the woman in the dream, that man was not an enemy as expected.

The man that had a voice Ryner felt nostalgic towards.

Although he completely didn't know what he was...

No, he had a spell cast on him, to make him unable to tell what was real? His memory had not only been erased, and as long as he thought about that man and woman, his thoughts were like a mist had descended upon them, making him unable to think clearly about things...

“...It seems that my illness is quite serious.”

Ryner tried to hit his head with a ‘thock thock thock’ sound. But, his brain didn't give him a response because of this.

Then, he turned around, lying back onto his bed.

Because it seemed like if he continued thinking he wouldn't be able to come up with a name.

“...”

He turned his face towards the ceiling.

His eyes were half-lidded, he had a lethargic appearance.

So, the red five-pointed star that was initially glowing gradually lost its glow, its colour fading.

Just like that, his eyes slowly lost focus. The familiar ceiling slowly blurred.

As Ryner stared at that blurry world, his thoughts whirled.

“...Someone knows about my past.”

An ally?

This point was unknown as of yet, but... he was definitely not an enemy.

He could confirm that point.

And those strange people who he didn't know where friends or foe seemed to want to tell Ryner something.

He thought of what happened in the Alpha Stigma.

The words of that woman—

*“...I...will be fine. As for you you have to hurry. Before the **Weaver of All Equations** appears... go towards the back... proceed in the direction of the door... then touch that door.”*

The **Weaver of All Equations**...

“...The **Weaver of All Equations**? Not the **Solver**? Then that means, it's not me? Then who is it?”

Talking about that, that existence inside me, what is that monster that has five-pointed star eyes and wings?

Is that the Alpha Stigma itself?

He thought about these matters, then shook his head.

There was no need to think too much about things that he wouldn't get an answer to no matter how much he thought about it.

Now he should think about what that woman said...

*“...go towards the back... proceed in the direction of the door... then touch that door.”*

Touch that door...

That woman had said. So Ryner touched the door.

At that time the scene that appeared before his eyes...

“...What was that?”

The man who held a sword, who couldn't stop crying.

The **Goddess** who screamed.

Finally that sword pointed to him.

The figure that was reflected in that sword.

Ryner felt fearful because of this.

Although he only saw it for a short instant, but, that was clearly the reflection of something not human.

A demon.

Yes, it would be most accurate to call it a demon?

Another monster that was not the same as the red monster in the dream.

A fear that made his whole body freeze just by taking one look at it.

He really only saw it for that instant, but that figure made Ryner feel frightened, fearful, disgusted.

The ominous darkness that enshrouded that thing made Ryner feel these

feelings.

But, what did that mean? What was the meaning in making me seeing that scene?

“...What message did she want to pass to me?”

Ryner thought.

But, he still couldn't find an answer.

That was obvious. Things were really too bizarre, and the information he had was pitifully little. Although he said that, had he himself missed something? Was there some things that he could finally clarify?

Ryner continued to focus his thinking.

“Memories that were wiped away”, “words that were etched on his chest”, “a red monster that had eyes with five-pointed stars”, “Offering”, “Key”, “Door”, “ $\alpha$ ”, “Seal”, “the woman who was swallowed by the monster”, “the man whose voice made him feel nostalgic”, “the hole that was opened on his chest”, “the man who held a sword, who couldn't stop crying”, “the ugly demon who was reflected in the sword's body”.

And—

“The Solver of All Equations”.

“The Weaver of All Equations”.

At this moment.

“...All...All Equations... Equations...”

As he murmured, he stared at the ceiling for a long while.

“...Ugh.”

As he thought about these difficult problems that he had no leads to, he stared at the ceiling blankly, after a while, his eyes slowly became dry, and he couldn't open them.

So Ryner closed his eyes.

A darkness appeared in his eyes.

He stared at that darkness.

The darkness.

It was dark.

As he stared at it, slowly, slowly!

“...Ah, I want to sleep...”

Things progressed as usual.

No, no, this time I’m not doing this because I find things too troublesome? How should I say this? Always thinking about things that I wouldn’t get an answer to is useless... after lying on the bed and closing my eyes, being able to sleep within a second is what is charismatic about me? Anyway, that’s that...

“Good night~”

Saying that, Ryner prepared to enter dreamland, right at this moment!

“Ryner!”

Suddenly a familiar and clear woman’s voice spoke, the door of the room opened with a creak.

Following that—

“Hey, Ryner, wake up! Something happened!”

Hearing that—

“...I’m not here now~”

Ryner pulled his blankets up and covered his whole body.

But, the woman took a large step into the room, forcefully grabbing the blankets off him.

“What are you saying! You’re clearly here!”

She shouted at Ryner.

Ryner heard that.

“...Ah~ I was about to sleep now...”

He said with a voice as if he were about to die, then opened his eyes slightly looking at the woman who had yanked his covers away.

So he saw, the woman before him was indeed a person he was familiar with.

Golden long hair that was stunningly glossy, slim blue eyes, and pale skin that was almost transparent.

Although she had beautiful features that could be called otherworldly, she always had an expression that lacked emotions.

This was his partner Ferris Eris.

This woman who was willful and uninhibited, proud, perverse, always using a sword to beat up Ryner had come today as usual and did not consider whether it was convenient for Ryner, pulling off the blankets from his body.

Ryner looked at her...

“...Wah, it’s something like...”

For some reason, Ryner had a strange feeling.

A strange feeling. A feeling as if he had woken up from a dream.

“...I have a feeling as if I was forcefully dragged back to reality~ when I see you.”

A feeling as if he had woken from a nightmare.

A feeling as if he had finally woken up from an unpleasant dream.

But, after waking up from the nightmare...

At this moment, Ferris threw the blankets to one side, even Ryner’s pillow

was picked up and thrown to one side.

“Something this serious has happened, and you’re still sleeping...  
sleeping.....You, why are you naked from above your waist.....You, you  
perveeeeeeeeeeeeert!”

“Sword! Don’t point the blade at me... Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!?”

The usual proceedings.

He was really not having a nightmare.

After he woke up from the nightmare...

A worse reality awaited him...

Was it that kind of feeling?

“...Ugh.”

Ryner was struck off the bed by Ferris, he raised his head from his position on the floor.

“...Ugh...Really, what are you doing so early in the morning~”

Saying that, he looked at the demon.

So her face reddened, and she turned it away.

“...Hu, hurry.”

“Eh? Hurry what?”

“Of, of course it’s hurry and put on your clothes!”

“Eh?”

At this moment Ryner finally realized. He realized that he had undressed the upper part of his body earlier, and he was currently naked.

“Eh? Ah... Speaking of which, sorry sorry.”

As he said that, he looked at his exposed chest.

The area where the strange black words were etched...

He used his hand to cover it.

“...”

Then he relaxed slightly. From Ferris's expression earlier, she didn't seem to see this thing.

It was good that she didn't see this.

Because there wasn't any need to get Ferris in this again. This was his own problem.

His own problem...

At this moment, the scene that he saw in the dream surfaced in his mind instantly.

A few strange scenes spun in his mind...

At this moment.

“A, are you ready?”

Ferris asked.

Ryner heard that, his mind clearing immediately.

“Ah, not yet.”

“Why are you so slow!”

“Sorry sorry. Wait for a while.”

Saying that, he looked around, using his leg to kick off the white armor battle uniform, that he had taken off earlier, finding a new shirt and putting it on.

Then he picked up the pillow that had been thrown at one side, placing it on the bed.

He rearranged the blankets that had fallen on the floor, wriggling into the blankets in an instant.

Then he closed his eyes...

Activating the special skill that only he had.

In not more than a second, he had flown to dreamland...

At this moment.

“Hey, are you not ready, Ryner?”

“...”

“...Hey.”

“.....”

“Hey, Ryner!”

“.....”

“What’s wrong, Ryner? Do you need to put that much effort into wearing a clothing?”

“.....”

“.....You, you’re kidding right? I’m turning around? Can I?”

“.....”

“Can I? I, I’m turning around?”

“.....”

In the next moment.

“Farewell, Ryner.”

“Waa!?”

When he was sent flying by the sword that was rapidly drawn, his whole person sent out of the window, RYner woke up.

“Ugh...Eh? It can’t be?”

Let me remind everyone, Ryner’s room was on the second floor.

Ryner looked down. So he found, the ground was rapidly approaching.

“It can’t be? The safe way to land... I wouldn’t make it... Waa!?”

So, Ryner died.

The flame of his life...

Was extinguished...

But a golden demon descended from the sky, stepping on Ryner’s corpse!

“Waaaaaaaaaaa!?”

“How is it? Have you woken up?”

“No, I’m already dead...”

“Un. It looks like he’s awake.”

“I said I died...”

“Then, let us return to the important matter I was talking about...”

“Eh!? My fall to death from the second floor is not an important matter?”

“The important matter I was talking about isn’t referring to other matters...”

“...This person clearly isn’t listening... Ah, forget it... then let’s make a deal, if you can move your foot from my back, before we talk, I will be very happy.”

“Uhn.”

So Ferris nodded, moving her foot from Ryner’s back and said:

“Get up immediately! You idiot. It’s already afternoon.”

Ryner heard that, as he stood up he said:

“Eh? It’s already afternoon?”

He raised his head to look at the sky.

The sun was clearly almost at its peak,

Afternoon.

It was clearly afternoon.

At this moment, a question arose in his mind.

How much time had passed since he blundered into that place that seemed like a dream?

According to what he remembered, when he encountered that monster’s attack, and met the man whose voice made him feel strangely nostalgic, it was in the morning.

But, it was the afternoon now.

That means...

How long had passed since my chest was stabbed, and stumbled into that strange place?

From the morning to the afternoon?

Or had he entered a state where his conscious wasn’t lucid for a few days, and finally woke up now?

Ryner asked Ferris.

“I say Ferris.”

“What?”

“Let me ask you, I ate dangos with you yesterday, right?”

“Uh, what about it?”

“No, nothing... that means—”

As expected he was killed this morning, and woke up in the afternoon...

And the two men deliberately carried Ryner’s body to the hotel that he was staying in.

“...As I thought they are not the enemies?”

“What does that mean?”

Ferris heard that, staring at him.

But, Ryner shrugged.

“No, nothing.”

“Uu? You’re hiding something from me?”

“No, that, it’s that. I had an unimportant dream just now.”

He wasn’t lying.

But, Ferris nodded as if she could understand.

“I see. You had a dream that, as usual, was immoral, and made people feel uncomfortable?”

“...Ah, what do you mean as usual...”

Ryner said in dismay. Then he said:

“Ah, let’s not talk about these boring matters... you said an important matter... what is it?”

When he finished saying that, he stared at Ferris with half-lidded eyes.

She was like usual, she was expressionless.

But, in the depths of her emotionless face... there was a strange joy hidden in a place deeper than the depths. That was something that only Ryner who had spent a long time with her could understand, it was really only that slight of a change...

Anyway, she seemed a little happy.

Seeing that, Ryner could roughly guess what she wanted to say.

It was definitely something about dangos.

Something big related to dangos had probably occurred again?

Like, she found another delicious dango store, or she had gotten a free complimentary ticket for a delicious dango store and so on.

When she revealed a happy expression, it mostly had something to do with dangos.

So Ryner said:

“...So? From your expression, it’s something about dangos again~?”

Then.

“Eh!? You, how did you know?”

“Right on the bull’s eye?”

Ryner said in surprise:

“Then, it’s that? Because you wanted to find delicious dango stores and things like that again, so you got me out of bed?”

But, she shook her head.

“No, the “Roland Empire Dango Store Map—the Spring Book” that I was working on before has been completed, it’s set to go on the shelf next week. So, there is no dango store that I don’t know here.”

“...Ah, that’s right... the “Roland Empire Dango Store Map—the Spring Book”... that means there will be books published in the other seasons?”

Then she nodded simply.

“Eh. Four publications every year.”

Ryner heard that, this time he was extremely surprised, he said:

“...I say, once dangos are mentioned, you’re quite hard working...”

“Eh. I have information about mame dango stores too.”

After saying that, for some reason, she bore an expression that said “how about it?” and looked at Ryner.

“.....S, so what about it?”

Ryner said, so Ferris for some reason, said as if she were happy:

“Un. Let me inform you, perhaps you didn’t notice, the pronunciation of “mame” in the mame dango I’m talking about and “diligent” are the same but are written differently.”

“.....Ah, I’ll just let you say what you like.”

“Heh heh, amazing right?”

“.....Y, yes.....It’s amazing.”

“Heh heh heh.”

Ferris seemed really happy, Ryner stared at her, and couldn’t help but sigh.

“Then, the important matter you were referring to couldn’t be this right...”

“Of course not.”

“Then, if the lady would be willing to cut into the main topic, I would be extremely grateful... it’s probably related to the fact that I sleep too lightly? I feel like sleeping now, and, hearing you mention mame dango, made me feel hungry.”

Ferris heard that, her eyes widening.

“Ah! Then, let us go and eat delicious mame dango now?”

“Oh? Alright. Then, is that store nearby?”

“Uh. It’s nearby.”

“Then along the way I’ll listen to the important matter you were mentioning,

is that fine?”

“Alright. Then, let’s go? Follow me.”

Hearing that they were going to the dango store, Ferris walked spiritedly.

It seemed that she had thrown the important matter to the back of her mind.

Ryner followed behind her, as he thought.

“...Did this person forgot about serious matters after going to the dango store?”

“Eh? What did you say?”

“.....Ah, nothing.”

“Ne, let’s go. Don’t loiter around here!”

“Yes~”

Then Ryner took unmotivated steps, and followed Ferris.

“...”

Today was a day with good weather.

The noisy scene that the afternoon timing brought about had appeared on the streets.

There were numerous customers, who had come to eat lunch crowding several stores. Perhaps it had something to do with the good weather? The human crowd was larger than before. There were stalls set up everywhere, the delicious smell of roasted meat and fish filled the air.

Smelling these flavourful smells, his stomach got more and more hungry...

“Ah, I can’t take it... if I don’t find something to distract me, my stomach wouldn’t last till the dango store...”

Ryner clutched his stomach, and spoke to Ferris who was walking before

him:

“Hey, Ferris.”

“Eh?”

“Let me ask you... isn’t it about time to talk about your matters? Walking blankly like this, just looking at a large number of food stalls, makes me feel like I’m in pain.”

Ferris heard that, in an instant, revealing an expression that she was unable to understand him.

“My matters? What matters?”

“This person really forgot...”

“Uh?”

“Ne, didn’t you say earlier that there was something important?”

Then, he revealed an expression that she was thinking about it, then she smacked her palm.

“Ah, that’s right!”

“You recalled?”

“Eh, I recalled.”

“Then let’s talk about that.”

Ferris heard that, nodding.

“The matter is about Ryner, it’s terrible!”

No, if it were really terrible, you shouldn’t have forgotten it... Ryner decided he should not make exasperated comments at her.

She continued:

“It’s like that, this morning, I had my daily patrol—the dango store pilgrimage...”

“...You ate dangos in the morning as well?”

“Of course.”

“What of course... Ugh, actually I don’t have the right to talk about other people, but, you still have to consider the problem of nutrition balance...”

But, Ryner’s words were cut off. She completely ignored him as usual, continuing to speak:

“In the period of time that I was doing the dango store pilgrimage, something happened.”

“...Something?”

“Eh. Something. At the terminal stop of the dango store pilgrimage Wynitt dango store...”

“Eh.”

“I seem to have...”

“Uh.”

“...Suddenly fainted.”

“Ah!?”

But, Ryner’s cry was still ignored, Ferris continued:

“Ugh, this wasn’t considered important... the problem was what happened next. When I woke up, it happened.”

Ryner asked:

“No no no no, wait a moment. Suddenly fainting, how can that not be considered a huge matter? Why did you faint? Did something happen to your body?”

Ferris shook her head when she heard that.

“No, my body has always been fine?”

“Would someone who is healthy suddenly faint?”

“...Ugh. That, once in a while I would faint...”

“How can that be? What does this mean? I think it is definitely caused by the unhealthy lifestyle? You only eat dangos every day...”

Ferris nodded when she heard that.

“Uhn. It’s probably because I’ve been indulging in dangos with fillings... in the future I will eat more cha dango...”

“That’s not the probleeeeeeeeem!”

Ryner shouted.

Then glared at Ferris.

“I say, you please... oh yes, you’re not allowed to eat dangos from today onwards, go and eat vegetables, vegetables!”

In an instant.

“Ugh...?”

Ferris revealed a slightly sad expression.

“It’s useless for you to put on that expression! I say... you actually fainted suddenly... really, I say...”

Please...

Ryner groaned in his mind.

Then he frowned, scratching hard at his messy hair, that could not return to its normal state.

Suddenly fainting...

What did this mean? What illness was it?

He could come up with a few illnesses that had this symptom, but...

One was anemia that arose from eating only one food group. If this was the cause, there should be room to improve her condition?

But, if it were other illnesses...

At this moment, Ferris looked at Ryner with a slightly unsettled expression.

“...You, are you angry?”

“Of course I’m angry!”

“...Why?”

Ryner glared at Ferris viciously when he heard this:

“Because I’m worried! Really, my companion died. The cause of death was over-consumption of dangos... can I sleep properly because of this?”

“.....Ugh. But, but, the results of a study show that, dangos are good for the body, it is a type of food with holistic nutrition...”

“Where can you get this type of reseaaaaaaaaarch! That’s it, don’t say something that can be recognized as untrue upon hearing it!! It’s not good to eat too much of anything!”

“...Th, then, mame dango...?”

“None of those are allowed today!”

“...Ah!?”

“Ah what ah! Really, I’m begging you... Uh, now isn’t the time to be discussing about food? Let’s see the doctor. Let’s see the doctor first. Ask Sion to introduce the best doctor in the country to you.”

Ferris heard this, scrunching up her brow.

“Doctor?”

“Yes.”

“No.”

“Are you a kid!”

Ryner shouted. Ferris revealed a slightly troubled expression

“B, but, Ryner. I look so energetic?”

Saying that, she spun her arms, and jumped around for Ryner to see...

“...”

Ryner glared at Ferris with half-lidded eyes.

“Look, how can I be sick...”

“...”

Ryner glared at Ferris with half-lidded eyes.

“...That.....So I.....”

“...”

Ryner glared at Ferris with half-lidded eyes. So, she used a timid expression to say:

“Ugh... N, no matter what, I have to see a doctor...”

Ryner heard that, nodding forcefully.

“Of course you have to go.”

“...Ugh. I’m really energetic.”

“That may be true, but you still have to go. Just in case.”

Ryner said that, he himself couldn’t help but feel scared.

Just in case... this possibility wasn’t low right? She who was able to wield a large sword, moving at a speed that normal people couldn’t see, had fainted because of anemia... this possibility was really unimaginable.

Then, what was the reason?

“...”

At this moment, a few worse case scenarios appeared in Ryner's mind. Fainting suddenly. According to this sign the illness he could think of was... There were many illnesses that made people feel unhappy. But, Ryner deleted these thoughts from his mind, speaking to Ferris:

“...Let’s go to the capital... Let’s find Sion, Ferris, alright?”

But she:

“...Ugh.”

An appearance as if she had an opinion.

“Ne, don’t be stubborn.”

“...Ugh.”

Even so, she still looked like she didn’t want to go, Ryner smiled wryly when he saw this.

He reached out a hand.

“Ah, really, ne, let’s go. We’ll see the doctor, if the doctor says it’s fine, then even if it is mame dango or dango with fillings I’ll let you eat until you’re satisfied.”

She heard this, her expression finally relaxing.

“...R, really?”

It seemed like the wariness she had earlier, was because she was worried that she would be unable to eat dangos from then on.

Ryner nodded when he heard that.

“Really really. So, let’s see the doctor now.”

“...Ugh...alright.”

Ferris still shook her head seemingly unhappily.

Ryner pulled Ferris's hand, as he pulled her he said:

"Then let's go."

Ryner stepped forward.

The streets were as noisy as usual.

The tempting scent of roasted meat and roasted fish drifted over from the stalls. Anyway, the flavorful smell spread everywhere.

Ryner smelled those scents.

"..."

Grumble. He heard his stomach calling, but he didn't heed it.

Following that the pitiful sound of Ferris's stomach grumbling sounded from behind him.

Ryner couldn't help it.

"Pfft."

"Y, you just laughed!?"

"I didn't. I didn't laugh. When did I laugh?"

"Liar! You just snorted..."

"I didn't."

"Kill..."

"Don't kill me!"

"Ugh... B, but, my current state is caused by you! M, my stomach has already decided to eat mame dango!"

"Yes yes. I know. Ah, my stomach is really hungry~"

☆

Lately his headaches had worsened.

It was a serious migraine.

And he would feel dizzy.

Lose his consciousness periodically.

And in the period of time that he lost consciousness, his memory would be blurry...

“...”

He held his head, raising his face.

The blurred scene slowly focused.

The usual scene.

Desk.

Shelves.

A simple office.

A serious migraine.

When he woke up it would always be like that.

Then,

“.....What did I do just now?”

Sion said in a voice that was so small that no one could hear it.

It seemed like he had lost consciousness again.

He knew it just by looking at the image of the desk.

That was evidence of him losing consciousness.

Documents that were piled up in mountains.

But, that was a pile of documents that did not exist in Sion's memory.

But, those documents had already been settled.

And.

“...”

The words written on the documents were in his handwriting.

That meant, he had seen those documents, and had settled them.

He didn't remember that happening, but he himself had settled this work.....?

“...”

He picked up the top sheet of the pile of documents.

Then he stared at the contents of the document.

It was a document about a particular case.

He stared at the document for a while... recalling the contents of it. His proceedings with the judgement, orders, signing of this case, slowly rose from the bottom of his memory.

Yes. It was true that he had judged it in that way.

But, he completely couldn't recall what place he was in at that time? Under what situation had he made this decision?

“.....Has it happened again?”

Sion said as if moaning:

“That person again...”

He leaned against the back of the chair.

Then sighed lightly.

His condition had worsened bit by bit lately.

When he lost consciousness, when he woke up... several days had passed...

This situation was no longer odd.

But, in the period where he lost his memories, Sion did not collapse and not move.

He worked as usual, giving orders to his subordinates, and talked to Ryner and the others.

The necessary memories of life were clear and accurate.

For example, the contents of the documents he went through, the contents of the orders he gave to his subordinates, and the contents of what he talked about with Ryner and the others in the period where he lost consciousness.

He could remember them.

But, what thoughts did he have at that moment? What were his actions?

To this aspect his memory was blurred.

“...I have already...started to be consumed?”

But—

“....”

This question had no answer.

Sion shrugged.

He knew that the side effects would appear.

The user of the “Sword” would be slowly consumed on the mental aspect.

Consumed by the lure of power.

But.

“...I...don’t plan to admit defeat.”

Then this time—

“...Heh heh. That’s obvious, Sion. So, that’s why I chose you.”

A response travelled through the empty space.

Lucile Eris.

Sion stared at the place where the voice came from, then said:

“...But, you are not my ally.”

“We’re allies.”

“...No...The thing living in my body is your ally, not me?”

“What is the difference? Anyway it is you.”

“...Is that me? But, that person wants to kill me...”

“...”

Lucile did not reply.

But, Sion knew, that person is attempting to destroy me.

Sion asked:

“...Whose ally are you?”

Lucile replied:

“...You’ve misunderstood. I am really your ally. You and he... both of you are troubled that is almost tragic. No matter whose decision, I will follow it.”

You and he.

Lucile had said that.

You and he are both so troubled that it is almost tragic.

“...You mean...that person is also troubled?”

Sion said unhappily:

“Hah. You say that a person who can cut off necessary things when it is necessary will be troubled? How hilarious.”

“...”

But, Lucile didn’t reply.

Then Sion continued:

“...I...”

“...”

“...I...will save Ryner.”

Then.

“...Heh, heh heh,ahaha.”

Lucile suddenly laughed.

“...You really are always a good person, so I like to stay with you. Although you always belittle him, you say things that are pleasant to hear... but you still move forward bravely. Save Ryner. For this purpose, you have already dirtied your hands... you...”

“Shut up!”

Sion said with a hoarse voice.

But, Lucile did not stop.

“...You have already made Callaud...”

“Shut...”

Then at this moment.

“Hey~ Sion~ Are you there?”

A voice suddenly spoke from outside the room.

A lethargic, dull and sleepy voice.

“...”

Lucile's aura which had been filling the room suddenly vanished.

The pressure on Sion disappeared like a wisp.

“.....Hu.....Hu hu.”

Sion pressed his chest that had been strangled by the pressure, panting uncontrollably.

From outside the room—

“Hey, Sion, are you not in~? If you're not in, I'll unlock the door and enter~”

This call sounded again.

Sion heard that.

“...Ah, wait. I'm opening the door now.”

He took a deep breath.

He breathed in forcefully and breathed out, as if wanting to spit out the dark feelings buried in his body.

Then.

“...”

He smiled.

A perfect smile. He smiled gently, not letting anyone see his inner heart.

“I'll open the door...immediately.”

Saying that, he stood up.

Then he walked to the door. He unlocked it, opened the door, then the two people he expected stood outside.

Carrying the expressions that he expected.

Ryner who had a lazy expression as usual.

Ferris who was even more expressionless than usual.

Sion saw that and said:

“Eh? Ryner, didn’t you say that you would sleep for three days before returning? Why are you back so fast? What happened?”

So Ryner walked into the room.

“It’s like that~ Ferris that person seemed to have eaten too many dangos, she fainted this morning.”

Sion heard that.

“Ah~ Fainted... are you alright?”

But, Ferris shook her head quickly as if rejecting this truth.

“I, it’s not the dangos’s fault! This morning I, I only fainted c, coincidentally...”

But Ryner said:

“I said there isn’t anything like fainting coincidentally!”

Sion nodded when he heard that.

“It’s true that there isn’t any saying about fainting coincidentally... do you feel uncomfortable anywhere?”

Saying that, he looked at Ferris, finding that she was as usual, expressionless.

“No, I’m very spirited...”

But, at this moment she looked at Ryner who was glaring at her with half-lidded eyes, then she suddenly lowered her voice until it was very small.

“...I, I think...”

Ryner interrupted Ferris and said:

“Sion, what do you think?”

“...Eh~”

Sion crossed his arms and thought.

Suddenly fainting...

It seemed like it was describing him.

Don’t tell me that they have discovered this matter, and specially came to trick me...

“...”

He guessed that in his heart, looking at the duo before him.

Ryner said with a serious expression:

“Just for convenience’s sake, do you have any headaches now?”

Ferris shook her head when she heard that.

“Dizziness?”

“No.”

“Nausea?”

But, Ferris only shook her head hard.

“I’m really energetic?”

Ryner ignored her reply, continuing to ask:

“Did you have this situation in the past?”

“No.”

“Then why would you faint this morning? Do you have a list of reasons in your mind?”

Ferris crossed her arms, raising her head to look at the ceiling.

“...Ugh~ Speaking of which, my memory’s not that clear...”

The two of them had this conversation.

It seemed like they weren’t here to trick Sion.

Sion knew from the start that these two weren’t people who would do this, if they had any questions they wanted to ask, they should ask straightforwardly and out in the open right?

So, Sion would trust the two of them this much...

Sion stared at Ferris.

“...No memories of fainting, this means... it could be that she coincidentally hit her head...”

Halfway through saying that he stopped.

Something like “hitting her head coincidentally” couldn’t possibly happen to this person Ferris right?

She was a member of the Eris Family.

The Sword Clan—the Eris Family.

She who had grown up in that family possessed physical strength, speaking frankly, it wasn’t something that a normal person could compare to.

Even if Sion used his maximum strength to throw a rock at her back, she should be able to dodge it easily?

This person wasn’t hit coincidentally.

Then the next reasoning—

“Where did Ferris faint?”

Ryner replied:

“She suddenly fainted at the Wynitt dango store this morning.”

“Wynitt dango store?”

“Eh.”

“That means, Ferris doesn’t have any memories of the time when she fainted, that means someone saw the situation when Ferris fainted?”

Sion asked, Ryner nodded.

“It seems like the boss of Wynitt entered the store to do something, when they came out they saw Ferris collapsed on the ground... So the owner of the dango store shook Ferris, and she woke up... Ugh, what did you say? You seemed to have said something strange about something important happening...”

Then Ferris suddenly became re-energized again.

“That’s right! That’s what I always wanted to say! It was the Dango Deity! The Dango Deity spoke to me in my dream!”

She actually said something odd.

Sion tilted his head in suspicion.

“Dango Deity?”

Ferris nodded forcefully.

“Eh! When I fainted, the Dango Deity who appeared in my mind told me this: “Your daily hard work is commendable”! Yes! My usual hard work has finally been rewarded!”

Ryner sighed hard as he watched from the side.

“Don’t mention about this kind of nonsense...”

“I, it’s not nonsense—! I, I have evidence!”

“Yes yes. I saw it earlier.”

“D, damn it, you still don’t believe me right! Look at it again, you will

believe it! See! Only someone like me who has been chosen by the Dango Deity has this mark!"

Saying that, Ferris unsheathed the sword by her waist.

Then she pointed the sword at Ryner and the others confidently.

"How is it!"

She shouted.

"..."

But, Sion completely couldn't see what she wanted him to see.

".....Eh? That, Ryner, what was the situation that progressed from earlier?"

Then Ryner carried a tired expression, pointing at the hilt of Ferris's sword.

"Look here. The portion nearest to the sword's hilt."

Then, Sion focused.

He looked at the long and large sword, that was well-kept, the blade was perfect and flawless.

According to what he had heard from Lucile, this sword wasn't an alloy that was made by special magical methods, it was a sword that was made for people born in the Eris Family... There was much discussion about this matter, but that did not matter now.

The important thing was that Ryner was pointing to the portion of the blade closest to the sword hilt.

There was a strange thing clearly stuck there.

It was a small thing like paper.

It was probably something like a seal pasted on letters? This thing was stuck tightly to the blade.

A black picture was drawn on that seal.

In the circle there was a picture that was like a pair of smiling eyes. A picture that had a small nose, and a picture that had a widely smiling mouth.

“...Is that a face?”

Sion asked, Ferris nodded vigorously again.

“It’s the Dango Deity’s face!”

Sion heard that, speaking to Ryner beside him:

“...The face of the Dango Deity that Ferris is frequently talking about looks like this?”

Ryner replied.

“How should I know?”

Right.

Sion looked at the seal pasted on the sword again.

It clearly looked like a face.

A smiling face in a dangō.

The more he looked at it the more he felt like it was a foolish face that seemed to mock people...

“You said that... what about it?”

Then Ferris said:

“When I woke up, my sword had this mark that the Dango Deity gave me!”

Saying that, she carefully hugged the sword to her chest.

Ryner stared at her with half-lidded eyes and said:

“...In addition the owner of the Wynitt dango store believed Ferris’s words, and told her “Impressive!? Ferris Ojou-sama finally gained the Dango

Deity's acknowledgement"..."

"...You mean, Ferris believed it?"

Ryner nodded.

Sion displayed a troubled expression when he heard this, softly speaking to Ryner:

"...Then, that seal that makes people feel disgusted is a present to Ferris from the boss of the Wynitt dango store?"

Then Ryner said softly too:

"...No, it shouldn't be? If that were the case, then it means the cause for Ferris fainting is... like the boss of the Wynitt dango store drugging her... but \_\_"

Sion nodded when he heard that.

"Eh. That store wouldn't do that... Or it should be said there's no meaning in doing that? If they do that and caused some incident to happen to Ferris, the Eris Family wouldn't keep their silence... talking about which..."

Was it a prank by Iris or someone?

Iris had left the country for work on orders this morning, but, she should still be with Ferris last night.

So, last night, Iris had pasted the seal on the sword, under the situation of not letting Ferris discover it, and Ferris had coincidentally discovered the seal when she woke up—it wasn't impossible for this to happen.

But a high-skilled user like Ferris, couldn't have not discovered that her sword had been tampered with in such a long time?

It was said that a first-rate master would feel a difference in weight, even if one corner of their sword were missing.

But, Ferris's sword abilities could not simply be described by saying first-rate.

Someone like this couldn't possibly not discover that a strange seal had been pasted on her sword?

That meant, there was only the possibility that someone had done something in the time she was unconscious...

But Ryner seemed to see through Ryner's thoughts and said:

"Perhaps it was Ferris herself who pasted it..."

"Eh? If that was so, then the problem wouldn't be the same? If she herself pasted that paper with a strange face, then called it the divine appearance of the Dango Deity... then that means the matter about her fainting also..."

Was a lie that she came up with.

But, Sion looked at Ferris.

She had a serious expression, staring at the seal pasted on the sword, then carefully kept the sword in the sword sheath.

"He he... This morning I had a feeling that something good would happen."

She said:

"...Eh~"

It seemed like she wasn't lying.

Sion looked at Ryner.

"What do you think?"

Ryner heard that, displaying a bitter expression:

"...When she pasted that paper with a strange face on her sword outside Wynitt dango store, she suddenly lost consciousness. In the end, the memories before she fainted became blur..."

"Ah, you mean she pasted it herself but forgot... then this means..."

A bad thought flashed through Sion's mind.

Because he thought of a few illnesses that would have this symptom.

A young girl like Ferris suddenly losing consciousness, fainting again and again, and the memories before and after she fainted were completely gone...

“...But, tha—”

At this moment, Sion stopped.

He looked at Ryner, he found that Ryner seemed to be thinking of the same thing.

“So we came here. Sion should know a good doctor?”

Sion nodded. Then he commanded the soldiers with a slightly louder voice, calling to outside the door.

“Robert!”

Then the door opened immediately.

“...”

But, the newcomer wasn't Robert.

It was an eighteen year old youth—who was slightly older than Robert.

He had features that were slightly immature, that did not fit his age, and had a head of soft, golden hair that was wavy, and a pair of cute blue eyes.

“...It's Calne?”

The one who appeared was Major General Calne Kaiwal.

His popularity was shoulder-to-shoulder with Clough Klom, he was one of the heroes of the Roland Revolutionary period.

When Sion was still in the military, he followed him.

Calne said:

“Sorry, Sion-san. I sent Robert to help me send a love letter to a noble lady... Do you need me to call him back?”

Sion heard that.

“...Love letter?”

Then Calne showed an embarrassed expression.

“No, it’s like that, recently I became acquainted with a forty-something year old woman, who’s very very beautiful... How should I say it? My heart of love immediately exploded.”

Sion heard that, revealing a surprised expression.

“You...have you not gotten rid of that habit?”

Yes.

Calne strangely liked mature women, constantly getting into affairs with married noble women, causing a large fuss.

But, Sion thought that after the younger sister Eslina Folkal of the ex-secretary Fiole Folkal became Calne’s secretary, he had already toned down quite a bit...

“...If the matter about the love letter was known by Eslina, you would...”

Calne heard that, panicking instantly.

“Ah, ah, ah, Sion-san wouldn’t report it to Eslina like Clauth-senpai right?”

“I wouldn’t do that, but... don’t do anything that would make Eslina sad. I think Eslina might like...”

But, Sion hadn’t finished speaking, Calne saw Ferris’s figure in the room.

“Ah! Ferris-san! It’s been a long time! You’re still as lovely as ever~”

He walked into the room.

Then he knelt on a knee before Ferris, reaching his hand out.

But Ferris saw this and said:

“...Eh? What do you want to do?”

Then Calne spoke politely:

“Of course I want to...offer my loyal kiss to the owner of this hand...”

Following that he gently lifted Ferris’s hand, then pressed his lips to that hand.

“...”

At this moment, Sion looked at Ryner.

He looked at Ryner’s expression.

Initially he anticipated that at least he could see a jealous expression on his face.

Then Ryner...

“.....Huah~”

He actually yawned.

Sion was slightly disappointed, then he shifted his gaze back to Calne and Ferris.

At this moment, Ferris flung Calne’s hand away forcefully.

“...Huh, I’m not that cheap that I will let a stranger kiss me.”

She said that.

Calne heard that, sticking out his tongue.

“Oh dear, I’ve been dumped. And what stranger are you talking about... I clearly met Ferris-san a few times before...”

“Ugh? Is it? I don’t remember that...”

Calne laughed when he heard that.

“Ah, that’s because at that moment Ferris-san... was slightly strange.”

“Eh? Strange?”

“Yes. Because Ryner-san was suddenly missing, you were extremely anxious...”

In an instant.

Clang! With a metallic sound, the sword that had a seal of a strange dango face pasted on it was unsheathed from Ferris's waist.

“What nonsense are you speaking?”

The sword was pointed at Calne's neck.

Sion saw that, couldn't help but laugh wryly.

Didn't that mean she admitted that she was actually anxious at that time?

At that time Ferris's display was indeed strange. Ryner leaving, made her uneasy for the whole day.

And this time, Ryner was worried that Ferris was sick, and brought her here.

“...”

Sion saw this, smiling.

No matter what was said, these two were actually on pretty good terms.

Sion thought, perhaps it should officially become a relationship...

But, faced with this development, Ryner still had an uninterested expression.

It seemed that things weren't so smooth sailing.

Ah, Calne and Eslina seemed to be like that too...

Seeing Calne faced with a sword, using a shrill voice to say:

“...Ah...That, I was joking, I was joking.”

Ferris heard that, keeping the sword.

“J, jokes should be controlled.”

“I, I apologize.”

After Calne confirmed that his neck was still there, he laughed:

“Lucky, I thought I was dead. Talking about which, Ryner-san is lucky. Having such a pretty beauty, and being loved by her...”

In an instant.

“Ah!?”

This time it was Ryner and Ferris who cried together at the same time.

Their yells made Calne momentarily shrink back.

“Eh? Ah? Isn’t that so? Aren’t the two of you lovers...”

Ferris interrupted him and said:

“What are you talking about? How can this man who is unmotivated and an eternal pervert be lovers with an amazingly explosively beautiful girl like me?”

Subsequently Ryner said:

“That’s right! Why am I with this woman who only looks good, and has a destructive personality..... wuuuuuuuuuuuuaaaaaaaahhh!?”

He was punched before he finished speaking.

Ryner who was hit by Ferris’s sword before Sion spun three circles, became a twisted shape.

“Ugh...”

His whole body collapsed on the ground.

Ferris saw that.

“...Ne, who is the woman with a destructive personality?”

“...I, I mistook the person, I’m sorry.”

Sion was already used to their method of interaction, but, Calne had a surprised expression, his mouth opened and shut as he watched this scene.

Calne looked at Ferris, then looked at Ryner. Lastly he looked at Sion, then

said:

“The, the blow earlier, wouldn’t it injure Ryner-san?”

This was an extremely normal reaction.

Sion laughed wryly when he heard that:

“...Ah, this is something common. Ryner, you’re fine right?”

Then Ryner maintained his position on the floor, saying tiredly:

“...Uuuhh, I’m really almost dying...”

It seemed, he was nearly dying. Sion heard that, smiled and nodded.

“It seems that there’s no problem.”

Calne was surprised again when he heard this.

“I, I can’t tell... He’s not as strong as the muscle idiot Clauth-senpai, receiving a sword blow like that and actually surviving... normal people would have died a long time ago?”

Ryner heard that, for some reason, he actually maintained his position on the ground, using a slightly touched voice to say:

“Wa! Wa! Finally a person with a normal reaction has appeared... Ne, you should tell that to that evil king and violent woman...”

But, he didn’t finish speaking, Calne said as if he were impressed:

“Ah, how impressive. You can actually joke about treading the boundary between life and death, you two must really trust each other... Really, and you lied about not being lovers, are the two of you so shy...”

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh!?”

Ryner and Ferris had the same reaction again.

Then Ferris said:

“Y, you, what nonsense are you speaking... Why am I with this eternally...”

Seeing the drama about to repeat again, Sion quickly interrupted her.

“Ah~ Forget it, Ferris, I will explain it to Calne clearly later... Anyway you should see the doctor first?”

So Ryner who had not wanted to crawl up from the floor suddenly got up swiftly.

“Yes! I say, don’t do anything foolish, see the doctor, see the doctor. Hey, Sion, hurry up and introduce a good doctor.”

Calne heard that:

“...If I may ask, does Ferris-san feel uncomfortable?”

Ferris said with an unhappy expression:

“No, I’m energ...”

But Ryner interrupted her.

“Of course she feels uncomfortable. The cause is not clear yet, but... just in case, isn’t that so? So, we wanted Sion to introduce a doctor.”

Calne heard that, looking at Sion.

“I see. So you wanted to find Robert, and arrange for a doctor to come?”

Sion nodded.

“Eh. Since Robert is not around, I’ll bring Ryner and the others...”

But, Calne shook his head frantically.

“No no no, I’m here, Sion-san doesn’t have to go that far. I will arrange it properly... Ah, then, please wait awhile.”

Saying that, Calne opened the door, poking his face out.

Then—

“Hey—Eslina!”

He shouted.

“...”

But there was no response.

Calne tilted his head in suspicion when he saw this, after he pulled his head back in, he confirmed the time.

“Eh? We already agreed so she should turn up...”

Then he poked his head out of the room again.

“Eslina, are you not here yet?”

He asked, then this time—

“.....Ah, yes! I’m heading to your side now.”

The cute voice of a girl travelled over from a far place.

After Calne confirmed that there was no mistake, he nodded as if satisfied, then turned back again.

“It’s like that, I agreed with Eslina to meet here.”

Sion looked surprised to hear this.

“Really, agreeing to meet a girl in front of the king’s office, what an impressive ability.”

Sion wanted to deliberately make fun of Calne, but—

“Right? Heh heh heh.”

Calne laughed innocently, scratching his head.

At this moment.

“I, I apologize, Calne-san, I’m late.”

A girl’s voice sounded, the office door opened following that.

Opposite Calne.

A girl appeared—Eslina Folkal.

Amber hair that was neatly tied up around her shoulders, coupled with a pair of blue eyes that sparkled with rationality.

Seeing those eyes, Sion couldn't help but smile.

He saw the figure of a person who was no longer living in those eyes filled with the light of intelligence, her brother Fione Folkal.

“Eslina, you look well.”

Sion said, Eslina turned and said to him:

“Ah, I apologize for not greeting you first, Your Majesty.”

Saying that, she solemnly bowed her head to greet him. The movements of her respect didn't seem like the form that a girl who had just turned fourteen years old would know. He could vaguely see how successful her brother's education was.

In comparison...

Sion thought in his heart, staring at Eslina's superior fixedly.

This person didn't even go through any pleasantries properly.

He was always getting involved with wives of nobles.

And he took Sion's room as a place to meet with a girl.

Was there no problem in making this sort of person responsible for education Eslina?

Sion thought of that, unconsciously—

“...Sigh...”

He sighed deeply.

Then Calne said:

“Ah! Ah! Why did you sigh like that!? When I meet with the wives of the nobles I pay my respects in such a serious manner that you couldn’t find any problems with it...”

He didn’t finish speaking.

Eslina who was standing behind Calne for some reason, used a slightly lower voice, that was actually different from earlier and said:

“.....Eh. Calne-san.....You’re saying that with who do you pay your respects in such a serious manner that no problems can be found with it?”

In an instant.

“.....Ah.”

Calne’s entire face twisted.

Then he turned back, staring at Eslina’s pouty, slightly unhappy expression, then said:

“.....Ah, no no, it’s that? I was kidding?”

“Hu~”

“It’s true.”

“I, I don’t care... it’s got nothing to do with me...”

“Weren’t you angry just now! Talking about which, why is it that every time I build a good relationship with mature women, Eslina would be unhappy? Doesn’t it have nothing to with you?”

Calne said this.

Sion heard that, he nearly opened his mouth to stop him.

But, when he saw the expression Calne had, Sion could only sigh heavily.

There was a smiling, innocent expression, like a child’s, on Calne’s face.

But, on that child-like face, there was a different emotion in his eyes!

“...”

But there was an extremely steady light in them.

That was the expression he had when he was pondering about something.

Sion had seen that expression of his on the battle ground several times.

When the battle situation turned urgent.

When the battle situation became despairing.

He would always reveal this expression, then find a strategy to break through the situation.

That usual relaxed was only an illusion.

That was obvious? A man who only knew how to flirt with women, passing his days in a daze could never be called Sion's left hand.

His popularity was at the same level as Claugh's—one of the heroes of the revolution period.

He was always a clever person.

And the conversation now.

It was clear, he knew what kind of feelings Eslina had for him...

Calne's actions seemed to be deliberately rejecting Eslina.

Always saying that he like other women, and had no interest in Eslina.

What was the reason?

Calne said:

“Really, don't always block the road of love of other people!”

Eslina heard that, showing an expression as if she wanted to cry.

“...I, I... didn't block your way! I only want you to work harder! When Calne-san is working doesn't he always fool around with women?”

“No, because that’s my work...”

“There’s no work like that!”

The two of them quarreled like that.

It seemed very tragic.

Sion raised his head to look at the ceiling,

“...Ah...It looks like Calne respects you a lot, he seems to have decided not to touch Eslina, Fiole.”

Of course no one replied him.

Fiole and Calne were close in age, their relationship wasn’t that bad either. His companion died, entrusting his younger sister to him... If he fell in love with his younger sister...

I—may probably have taken this attitude without noticing it.

Sion thought.

Then he cried not good in his heart.

He thought, Fiole must be willing to hand his younger sister to Calne too.

Oh yes, that person Fiole seemed to say he would hand his younger sister over to someone...

Who was it?

Sion searched his memory.

When Fiole was alive. What had that guy said?

Then he thought of it...

In Sion’s memory.

Fiole laughed. A gently smile that was like Eslina’s. In his memories, the conversation between them.

At that time he said this:

“...But, hahaha! But I believe there will be many girls who will love Astal-sama because of simple feelings? Even me too, even if it is not towards your title of king, I would want to marry my younger sister to Astal-sama.”

Sion thought of that, unconsciously hugging his head.

“...I actually thought of something this bad.”

He said softly.

And he was grateful that Eslina had not fallen in love with him, but Calne.

“...”

Because I...cannot respond to the feelings of other people.

No, it shouldn't be called respond.

Because I am already...

But, at this moment Sion shook his head. This wasn't the time to be discussing about this.

Anyway, no matter what, Eslina did not love Sion, but Calne.

And Calne would definitely desire for her to be happy.

And the friendship with the brother Fiole, and—

The love between the younger sister Eslina?

Ugh.

Right?

It seemed like...

“.....Love seems difficult.”

He looked to the side at Ryner and Ferris, who had at some point in time, had started a furious debate that he didn't know whether their relationship with

each other was good or bad, murmuring softly.

Ryner heard that and looked at him.

“Eh? What did you say?”

“Ah, nothing.”

“Ah, I don’t care, hurry up and introduce a doctor... or else this person will say something boring like let’s have a dango store patrol tonight...”

So Ferris said:

“Wh, what do you mean boring! Don’t you know how much contribution nightly dango store patrols has given for world peace!”

“Who knows?”

“Ah! So I said you are a lousy man!”

“Ah, yes yes, I am lousy, so be good. Or else, who knows at what time your condition would worsen...”

This was the content of their conversation.

It was a conversation that love, or any emotions couldn’t be detected from it.

Sion heard that.

“...Ah.”

He sighed again, then turned to Calne.

“It’s like that, bring Ferris to see the doctor...”

Just at this moment.

With a kacha sound, Calne suddenly clasped the handcuff on Sion’s hand.

Sion looked at the handcuff.

“Eh? What’s this?”

But, Calne ignored him, then clasped the other handcuff on Ryner’s hand...

Kacha.

Ryner saw that.

“...Ah? What is this?”

So after Calne and Eslina looked at each other, they smiled widely.

“Then, Sion-san, Ryner-san, Ferris-san, the preparations for the health check-up have been made! Please stay in the hospital together with much love~”

He actually said that.

Sion heard that.

“Eh? Stay in the hospital?”

Following that Ryner asked too:

“Why do I have to be hospitalized?”

Calne showed a smile that was like a prank child's and said:

“Because Sion-san isn't eating properly every day, he only knows how to work through the night, meaning that after he sleeps a few hours in a dead faint he would continue working throughout the night, his body has already reached its limits! He should be hospitalized! If he doesn't rest properly, and the doctors check his body, he would have problems! So, I previously discussed with Eslina, initially we had planned to bring you away today, I didn't think that, even Ferris-san was ill too! This is called kill two birds with one stone!”

He finished it eloquently in one breath.

Hospitalisation and a health check up...

But Sion said when he heard that:

“B, but, I have a lot of work...”

But, Calne interrupted him.

“I knew you would have many excuses not to cooperate with me, so I specially took handcuffs along. Just to mention, the key to these handcuffs is placed in the hospital... so, please stay in the hospital.”

Ryner heard that and said:

“Wait. I agree that there is a need to let him stay in the hospital for more than ten years, in order to cure this illness that Sion this idiot has caught, that bullying illness that is rumoured to be incurable... But, why do I have to go along?”

Calne heard that, showing an expression like he hadn’t thought about this in an instant, then said:

“.....Convenience’s sake?”

“How can this be convenieeeeeent!”

“Ah, what does it matter? I feel that there’s no harm in letting the doctor check on you? And I prepared many nurses onee-san...”

“I don’t need that.”

“So as to accommodate Sion-san’s status, even the mattress is of the highest quality...”

“...Oh?”

“The blankets are made from the high quality feathers.”

“Oh my?”

“And since you’re a patient, you can forget about work, you can sleep however you like every day?”

“Oh my dear... You are amazing. I already want to be hospitalized now.”

“Right? Then, are you willing to be hospitalized with Sion-san, and implant the disease of staring off blankly for a thousand years in Sion-san’s mind that only knows of work?”

“Ah, ah, this is my specialty.”

“Then that’s decided.”

Sion heard that.

“No no no no, it’s not decided... I still have a large mountain of work to do...”

But, he hadn’t finished speaking, the handcuff cuffed around his wrist was tugged hard by Ryner.

Ryner said:

“Alright alright, don’t say stubborn things like Ferris.”

He said, using another hand move to carry Sion up.

But—

“Ugh.”

Sion stopped that hand immediately.

So, Ryner reached over with that hand that had the handcuff on it.

“Ah, stop resisting.”

But—

“How can I like you do as you like?”

Sion took preventive measures.

So, the pair entered a competition of arm strength.

“Ugh.”

“You bastard.”

The two of them frowned.

Sion increased the force of his arm as he said:

“I...am not going... Didn’t I make that clear?”

But, Ryner grabbed Sion's hand.

"That's what you said... But if you collapse because you're overworked, then there is no... meaning to it right!"

He pushed back hard.

Sion pushed him back again.

"...What, nonsense, are you speaking... You, you... only want to sleep in feathered covers, right?"

Ryner pushed back hard again.

"...That's, you, because you're scared of injections... so you don't want to go, to the hospital, right?"

"Ugh."

"Eugh."

Their strengths were matched.

No.

No, the victor had been determined.

Sion held the advantage slightly.

Sion's arm slowly started to dominate Ryner's...

"...Uuuuhhhh!"

But, at that moment.

Sion remembered.

The distant past.

When Sion was still a student at the Royal Special Military Academy.

Not long after he knew Ryner.

Kiefer, Fahl, Toni, Tyle...these companions still hadn't died.

Everyone was comparing arm strengths in the inn.

Initially his companions were playing around, but at some point in time, they actually started playing for real.

Kiefer scolded Ryner who was initially unmotivated angrily, wanting him to compete properly.

So, Sion had competed with Ryner.

It was an entertaining competition.

Both parties were unmoving, it lasted for minutes.

But, the end result was... Sion won.

“...”

In truth.

In truth, he couldn't possibly win.

In the dark department of Roland—the interior of the “Hidden Elites”, Ryner was an especially outstanding existence.

He even had a nickname called “The Strongest Magician of Roland”.

If Ryner was serious, Sion couldn't possibly win him.

But at that time Sion won.

Like now.

“...”

Sion injected power into his arm, Ryner's body was slowly suppressed by Sion.

But at that moment.

“.....What.”

Sion relaxed.

So Ryner laughed.

“Yo, are you already tired?”

Sion heard that, shrugging.

“...What’s the point in winning a person who didn’t put in his whole strength in competing...”

“Ah? Didn’t I use my full strength?”

“Lies!”

“It’s not, it’s true... my muscles can’t be compared with yours.”

Saying that Ryner looked at his arm, then looked at Sion’s arm.

“But, ugh... have you weakened? It was weaker than two years’ ago?”

“Eh?”

Sion looked at his arm too when he heard that.

It didn’t seem like anything had changed, but had his muscles really shrunk?

Not fighting on the front lines, being chased by paperwork every day, perhaps his body had become dull...maybe?

Sion narrowed his eyes.

Then he sighed.

“Alright, in the future I’ll find time to train my body...”

“Is there such a thing!”

Calne said in surprise:

“Really, what if your work load increases? Please work hard in the direction of reducing the amount of work.”

But, Sion laughed when he heard that.

“But, if I’m hospitalized, the work will accumulate...”

But, Calne interrupted him again.

“Those accumulated works, Eslina and I will come up with a way to deal with it. Please rest properly this time. I’m begging you.”

Calne carried an expression that he never had, bowing his head and pleading earnestly.

“...”

It seemed that no matter what Sion couldn’t reject it.

So he said:

“.....Ugh...Ah...I understand. Since you are saying that, I’ll rest for a day...”

But Calne said:

“It’s a week.”

“...Ah?”

“I planned for Sion-san to be hospitalized for a week, to rest properly.”

Calne said.

Sion heard that.

“...Ah? No, that would be a little challenging. I don’t have the time to rest for so long...”

“There is! Even if you travel all over the world, you definitely can’t find a king like Sion-san who works without resting right? What if you really collapse?”

“B, but, a week...”

“No! This matter has been closed. I have already passed the plan for Sion-san to rest for a week to the head of administration, head of military affairs, head of the palace affairs and everyone, this is a large plan that was decided on

two months ago, it can't be changed at this point!"

"Two, two months ago? Is that so?"

Sion heard that and asked Eslina, for some reason, she actually displayed a slightly apologetic expression.

"I'm sorry... Because every night brother will come to my dreams and say "You have to let Sion-san rest, you have to let Sion-san rest", so I discussed about it with Calne-san, I..."

"...You planned this?"

"I, I'm sorry."

Eslina apologized ceaselessly, but Calne told her happily:

"No, Eslina doesn't have to apologise! Because the one in the wrong is Sion-san who doesn't know what is called rest, who only knows how to work desperately! Even Fiole who is in heaven is worried for you, what are you thinking of!"

Sion heard that, thinking of when Fiole was alive, wanting him to "*rest rest*" every day...

"...Ugh."

Sion frowned.

Calne saw that, revealing a victorious expression.

"Ne, please give up! I want you to rest for a few days properly~"

Saying that, Calne turned to look at Ryner.

"Then, Ryner-san, Sion-san~"

"OK~"

Saying that, Ryner pulled at the handcuff again.

Then his other hand attempted to grab Sion.

But, Sion momentarily made to stop that hand...

“...”

But.

Sion couldn't make head or tail of what happened next.

When Ryner touched Sion's hand, he didn't know how he did that, Sion's joints were restricted, and his legs were hauled up, so his whole body was lifted in the air.

Then.

“Heh!”

Ryner shouted, unknowingly, Sion's body over Ryner's shoulder.

Sion saw that.

“..... I say, you went easy on me just now, right?”

He said as if throwing a tantrum, Ryner moved his gaze from his body.

“I'm not using strength now, it's technique. There's no difference in the strength used.”

“Nonsense!”

“Oh dear, it doesn't matter if it's nonsense...”

Then Ryner looked at Calne.

“Then, while Sion isn't shouting about work, take us to the hospital? Ah, and, he's heavy, can you help me carry him?”

Calne heard that, laughing happily.

“Then, Eslina is in charge of carrying his feet, Ryner-san will carry his shoulders, I will be in charge of carrying his waist.”

Saying that, the three people started to divide the work to carry Sion.

“I say what are you doing? Wait. Alright, I’ll go to the hospital obediently, put me down...”

But, Calne still had a happy expression.

“No no, Sion-san is a patient, so please relax. Then, let’s go~”

So the audience started to move.

Carrying Sion as if carrying a sedan chair.

“...Ah, this is a bit embarrassing...”

But, no one listened to Sion’s words.

Ryner, Calne, Eslina left the office.

So, Ferris who had hid in the corner of the room at some point in time, preparing the dango celebration feast efficiently waved her hand at them as she said:

“Ugh, then the two of you have to get well.”

“Hey!”

Ryner and Sion shouted at the same time.

Ryner said:

“...You’re the first patient! And~ why are you still staying here!”

Following that Sion said too:

“Ah, that! And you still eat that dango! What if Ferris really falls sick from eating too many dangos...”

Ferris heard that.

“...B, but, I’m in the time period where I will die if I don’t eat dango...”

“There’s no such time period!”

Ryner and Sion shouted in unison again.

Ryner said:

“That’s enough, this will not end if it continues. Sion, please use that bomb.”

He said that.

Bomb...?

In an instant, Sion was unable to comprehend the meaning behind Ryner’s words, tilting his head in doubt, then—

“Ah... That?”

“It’s that.”

“Then let’s do it.”

“Go, Bully King!”

Saying that, Ryner pointed at Ferris.

So Sion launched the bomb in the direction he pointed in!

“...If you don’t listen obediently, Wynitt dango store will stop operating tomorrow!”

In a moment.

“Ah!?”

Ferris showed a despairing expression.

The effects were immediately shown.

She glared viciously in this direction.

“.....You, you bastards...”

But, Sion smiled when he saw that.

“Oh? You want to protest? Calne, immediately order Wynitt dango store to stop operating...”

“Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaait!!”

Ferris shouted.

Ryner saw that, for some reason, displayed an extremely happy expression.

“...Ah, it’s like... it’s like there is a very comfortable feeling. The resentment that accumulate usually was swept away in an instance...”

Ferris heard that, her body trembling with fury, viciously saying:

“.....You, you bastards, in, in the future don’t cry and say you regret...”

But Ryner answered:

“Sion, she’s saying these vicious things.”

“Eh. Then, impose a special tax on all the dango stores in Roland...”

“Waaaaaaaaaaaaaa!?”

The effects were immediately seen again.

Ferris said:

“You, you demon.”

For some reason, Ryner turned his head to look at Sion when he heard this.

“You demon!”

“...Eh? Am I the only demon here? Ah, forget it... then, Ferris, if you don’t want me to do that, then go to the hospital.”

Sion said, Ferris’s reaction was—

“Ugh...”

As she groaned, she gave up on the preparation work for the dango celebration feast reluctantly.

And followed the rest out of the room.

Thus, these two were strangely hospitalized together.

There was still a mountain of paperwork on the table.

It was clearly a mountain of paperwork...

“Ugh...”

Sion sighed largely when he saw that.

☆

Three days later.

The hospital.

And the location was a special facility that only heavily injured patients could enter.

In one of the rooms.

“.....Ugh.....Ah.....!?”

He let out a pained sound.

Searing pain as if his whole body was nearly ripped into pieces.

It was so painful that it was as if his whole consciousness was dug out.

But faced with this situation—

“...Heh...Can a small matter like this defeat me?”

He laughed instead.

Red hair that seemed like burning flames.

Crimson and sharp eyes.

Hidden under the hospital clothes that patients wore was a body that was like metal after complete training, and did not seem like what an ill or injured person would have.

Claugh Klom.

In Roland, there probably wouldn't be anyone who didn't recognize, or know the name right?

He was the Field Marshal of the Roland army, the first aid of the Hero King Sion Astal.

Talking about which, the name Crimson-Fingered Claugh Klom was probably more famous than his original name?

Crimson-Fingered Claugh Klom.

On the battle ground, that was the name of the death god.

The figure with the right arm stained with the splashing of the enemy's blood, made everyone fearful.

The death god of the battle ground.

His right arm that had been tattooed with red tattoos had even been called the devil in neighbouring countries.

But now...

“...”

Claugh looked at his right arm.

But, his old arm couldn't be seen in that place.

By that Alpha Stigma monster his arm had been.....No, according to what Sion said, that was something that was another type of Cursed Eyes monsters

called the Iino Dwoe..... Anyway, it had been eaten by that monster.

“...”

So, a fake arm was installed in that place now.

A special limb called the “Cursed Prosthetic”.

Its shape wasn’t much different from Claugh’s original arm, but, that arm was regenerated with “forbidden curse”, thus it was always covered with blackness, the curse crawled everywhere, as long as there was an opportunity, it would attempt to kill the user.

He looked at that arm.

“...Ha. Crimson-Fingered Claugh Klom... how can a black arm fit in...”

He laughed as if he were unhappy.

What was said to be forbidden magic, like what the name suggested, it was a type of forbidden curse.

It was a magic that was normally forbidden to use.

But, Claugh’s arm had been regenerated because of that forbidden spell.

As long as this arm moved, a pain that was so intense that it made his mind almost go berserk would pass through his body. And, if he over-did just by a bit, it would lose control immediately, killing the user.

Claugh installed this arm.

Actually there were healing techniques or magic that could let his body regrow... but he chose this technique.

The reason was simple.

So that the next time he met the Cursed Eyes monster he would have enough power to kill him.

He couldn’t let that kind of situation happen again.

He could let that happen, watching his companions be killed, but he himself escaping tragically.

Next time he definitely would not!

“...I want to kill that monster.”

And the cursed prosthetic was a curse that had this power.

So, he used this arm.

“.....Seven hundred, and twelve...”

He used only his right arm to do push up exercises again.

So, pain passed through the area where the cursed prosthetic and his shoulder were connected.

It was an excessively intense pain, making his consciousness nearly disappear.

When he tried on the arm, the black curse would invade the interior of his body, attempting to enter Claugh’s body from his shoulder...

But—

“.....Damn it.....This degree of pain would make me lose...control...”

As he trembled, he lowered his body again, using his arm’s strength to support his body.

“Seven hundred... thir...teen... Seven hundred...”

At this moment.

The door to the hospital room was opened.

Claugh saw that.

“Eh?”

Raising his head, he saw a woman standing in the doorway.

The woman stared at Claugh who was on the ground doing push ups.

“...”

Claugh knew this woman.

She had dark blue long hair that was rarely seen in the Roland Empire.

Beautiful eyes that shone with blue light.

She was Noa Ehn, the princess of the ex-Estabul Kingdom.

She was younger than Claugh by seven years... although she was still a seventeen year old girl, but she was smart and gentle...

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhh!?”

But, at this moment Noa screamed.

And those pair of eyes that were usually incomparably steady were wide.

“You, you, you, what are you doing, Klom-sama!?”

She shouted.

Claugh heard that, answering as he bent his arm:

“...Ah, I am doing rehabilitation push-ups...”

“You caaaaaaaaaan’t!”

Noa who was usually elegant gave a rare scream again.

“You, you can’t!? Your arm was regenerated after much difficulty...”

But, Claugh said:

“Ah, I’m completely recovered. Thank you for your concern.”

For some reason, when Noa heard that, that pretty face contorted.

“...C, completely recovered!? You said completely recovered... The doctor instructed you to definitely rest quietly...”

“Haha, I said it’s fine. Look, my condition’s this good...”

Saying that Claugh made as if to continue with the push-ups...

Noa saw that.

“W, wait!”

She walked into the room with an expression as if she were about to cry, grabbing Claugh’s hand, attempting to prevent him from doing push-ups.

“Uh, eh... ugh~!!”

She pulled hard at Claugh’s arm.

But Claugh smiled widely.

“...Then, I’ll let you see how much I’ve recovered now?”

Just like that, he used a finger to forcefully hold on to the ground, then in a breath he lowered his body, Noa lost balance, falling on his back.

But, Noa’s light mass didn’t matter to him

He carried her like that, continuing to do the push-ups.

“One, two...”

“Ugh, Cla, Claugh-sama. No! Don’t...”

“Eight, nine, ten, eleven...”

“Don’t do it... If you continue to force yourself, the curse will lose control again...”

“I said it’s fine. I really wouldn’t do anything to make you worry...”

But, at this moment.

“...”

Noa hugged his back tightly.

“.....I, I’m begging you... I’m begging you, Claugh, please listen to me...”

At this moment, Claugh finally stopped moving.

He felt a place near his neck turning wet because of something.

“.....Ugh, it can’t be.....that.....Noa, are you crying?”

So, she stuck close to Claugh’s back, saying with a reprimanding tone:

“...Be, because.....Cлаugh.....isn’t willing to listen to me...”

Her voice was filled with sobs.

Cлаugh heard that, scrunching up his brow.

Because she was a woman who definitely wouldn’t cry so easily.

She lost her country, but, to protect the people of her home country, she came forward to Roland as a hostage, even under such circumstances, she was always carrying a smile at any time.

She was those type of women who would not drop a single tear when she came to the enemy country, but...

But, the present her was crying so easily.

“.....Ugh, are your tears because of me.....?”

“...”

She did not speak, still hugging Claugh’s back tightly.

Cлаugh saw that—

“...”

He used his empty left arm to scratch his head, then he reached behind him, gently stroking Noa’s head while she cried.

She heard that, hugging his back even more tightly.

“...Because I, I thought you were about to die... I saw Claugh coming back with his whole body covered in blood... His a, arm was gone... Claugh... I... under a situation that I am not aware of... but, now you are again...”

Saying that, she cried again.

Claugh saw that.

“...”

Claugh couldn't help but want to hug Noa.

But.

“...”

He banished this thought.

Then he sighed lightly.

“.....It's my fault. But, you don't have to cry. I wouldn't let you be even more worried about me...”

He said that.

But, that was a lie,

That was impossible.

He would die on the battle ground one day. He bore the curse of the people that he had killed before, one day he would eventually die on the battle ground.

That was the destiny of a military man.

So all this time, he had no lovers. Because doing that would only make the other party sad.

He didn't need lovers, and he didn't need family.

He himself thought that one day he would die somewhere, and it would be better to decrease the number of people who would shed tears for him.

So he said:

“...Eh? Don't cry. I will rest properly for a time.”

So Noa said with a tearful tone:

“...Is, is that true?”

She said that with an emotional voice. A fine, gentle voice.

For some reason, hearing that kind of voice, Claugh would always have a feeling as if his heart was being squeezed.

He caressed her slender neck.

He stroked that body that was too delicate.

He wanted to hug her tightly...

But, Claugh said:

“...Ah, I’m sorry, Noa... you’re leaning on my back, I feel that it’s heavy, my arm is starting to ache.”

He lied again.

Noa heard that and frantically said:

“Ah, ah, I, I’m sorry!? I will now... ah!”

Perhaps she was too frantic? She nearly rolled off Claugh’s back.

And it was position where she was falling head-first.

At the critical moment—

“Ah, it’s dangerous!”

Claugh hugged her body, using the black arm.

Due to him hugging her in a posture that wasn’t advantageous for him, it caused a pulse of pain to pass through his shoulder again.

But.

“...”

But, her body was still that warm, it was warm enough to make Claugh momentarily feel that these pains did not matter. Just like that, he nearly

hugged her tightly on impulse.

“...”

But, he still resisted.

Noa cuddled in Claugh's embrace, her face red with embarrassment.

“...Ah, that, I'm sorry.”

He shrugged when he heard that.

“Are you hurt?”

“I, I'm fine.”

“That's good. Then... can you stand up?”

“...Eh.”

So, she attempted to stand up again.

“Claugh-senpai!”

The room's door suddenly opened, the voice of a man that Claugh did not want to see the most now sounded.

Claugh heard that, looking at the doorway to the room.

A man stood in the doorway.

It was Claugh's underclassman, his best comrade during the past revolution period.

Calne Kaiwal.

Calne stared at Claugh and Noa who seemed to be hugging each other for a while...

“.....Oh my? It seems like I am a killjoy~”

A wide smile appeared on that gentle face.

Claugh heard that.

“No, you might have misunderstood a little.”

But, Calne still smiled widely.

“No no, no matter how you look at this situation it’s not a misunderstanding. Ah, then, my things can be discussed about at a later time, please take your time...”

“I said you misunderstood!”

Claugh shouted.

But Calne said again:

“Ah, I will tell Eslina too, this is now the space for adults, you cannot come in whenever you like. Doing this would be bad for her education.”

“I said!”

“Ah, you don’t need to explain. I also agree with this kind of recovery method! Really, you didn’t control yourself and over-trained again last night, causing the cursed prosthetic to go berserk, and nearly died, causing me to be very very worried...”

In that instant.

Noa—

“...Ah?”

She said with a slightly low voice:

“.....I say, Claugh-sama, is what he said earlier true?”

There was a slight sarcastic tone in her words.

Noa’s gaze made a slight ache pass through Claugh’s heart, but he deliberately moved his eyes away.

“...No, that...”

But Noa interrupted him.

“...Last...night...over-training...nearly dying, is what Calne-san said earlier true?”

“...Ah~ How should I say this? That...”

At this instant, Claugh glared viciously at Calne who was standing in the doorway.

His eyes were abnormally sharp.

But, Calne still had a joyful expression, for some reason he pushed his acting abilities to their limits, using a trembling voice to say:

“...Ah, I, I’m sorry Claugh-senpai... I clearly knew that the only person that couldn’t know of this secret was Noa-san, I am really~”

“...You you...”

But, it was too late.

“...Cl~augh~s~an...”

Noa’s body was trembling in Claugh’s hold...

Perhaps this was a tremor that was caused by extreme fury. No matter how generous, Noa’s patience had finally reached its limits too. Claugh panicked when he saw this.

“Ah, that... I, I, will sleep... I will rest quietly... is that fine? So...”

Saying that, he looked at Noa as if deliberately trying to make her happy.

So she—

“...”

But, she wasn’t angry, on the contrary she cried again.

“Wa!?”

Claugh saw that, and was surprised.

Calne stood at the back, watching the other’s misfortune with a happy face

and said:

“Ah~Ah~Ah~Ah~ Claugh-senpai made a girl cry!”

“Eh, is it me? No, that, it’s, it’s all because you were a busybody, and said something that shouldn’t be said...”

But, Calne interrupted him.

“What could I do? If I didn’t do this, Claugh-senpai who is all brawns and no brains wouldn’t rest obediently.”

“All, all brawns and no brains...”

“And, now Noa-san is trying so hard to stop, but you are still stubbornly doing push-ups...”

“Ah!? How long were you watching...”

But, at this moment Claugh stopped.

Calne this person would definitely saw something silly like this without changing his expression—

“I did and I didn’t, I didn’t see Claugh-senpai actually wanting to hug Noa-san tightly, but after that banished the thought? Really.”

So, Claugh could only glare viciously at Calne, then looked at Noa and said:

“...I, I understand. It’s my fault... Ne, I’ll rest properly alright? I will lie down obediently.”

“...”

“I, I swear... It’s really my fault... Don’t bully me too much.”

Noa heard this sentence, her face regaining the smile she had slightly.

“...The ones who are bullied...are us.”

So Calne nodded too and said:

“That’s right, Claugh-senpai, how worried must we be in order for you to

give up?”

“...Ugh...”

At this moment, Calne walked over.

“Ne, since you have decided, then please sleep quickly. I will help you arrange the bed...”

“There’s no need.”

Claugh said and stood up, sitting on the bed.

“Ne, Claugh-senpai, these are well-wishing flowers.”

Calne said, holding a bouquet of flowers before Claugh.

Claugh frowned when he saw that.

“...Flowers? I don’t want that kind of stuff. On the other hand is there anything to eat?”

At the same time he said this, Noa said happily:

“Wow, how beautiful.”

Then the two exchanged glances.

Noa had a slightly worried expression and said:

“Are you hungry? Claugh-sama?”

So, for some reason, Calne actually replied:

“Claugh-senpai has always been very hungry~ Because he is unbelievably perverted.”

Claugh glared at him, initially he wanted to say “I think this would be better than the perverted you?”, but after that he forcefully squashed this thought. If they continued with this topic before Noa...

“If you don’t have some reaction to beautiful things once in a while, Noa-san must feel very lonely?”

--Calne would definitely say this.

This person seems to want to get me and Noa together..

So Claugh turned to look at Noa.

“...I’m sorry, Noa. I really seem to be a bit hungry. Could you tell the service staff, and request them to send some food over?”

So she nodded.

“Eh, I’ll help you to put the flowers in a vase along the way.”

“It’s been hard on you.”

“Then, I’m leaving.”

So she carried the flowers and left the room.

Claugh watched her leave, after confirming that she had already left the room, he turned to shout at Calne.

“...You bastard... What are you planning!”

Calne said:

“What about what am I planning? It’s because Claugh-senpai showed that he was maturing late which was something that was never seen before, so I lent you a helping hand!”

“Maturing late... I say... I don’t plan to court Noa.”

“Liar.”

“How am I lying? She is... that, that... not to my liking.”

He said that.

Calne stared at Claugh steadily, then repeated:

“Liar.”

“I said I’m not lying.”

So Calne narrowed his eyes, staring steadily at Claugh and said:

“Oh... Then that means, it doesn’t matter if I did these things...”

“Wh, what do you mean?”

“Nothing nothing, ever since Noa-san came, Claugh-senpai wouldn’t touch other women... your relationship is clearly so good, but you didn’t make any moves at all, but this time... as long as Noa-san is present, Claugh-senpai will behave weirdly... This kind of situations made me confused...”

“You’re noisy... I’ll leave it up to you to imagine.”

“Eh? I can?”

“Don’t think of nonsensical things!”

“Then what do you want me to do~”

Calne said as he laughed.

Ridiculing Claugh like this made him happy.

Then, he said with a slightly stern expression:

“But... I am grateful that Noa-san is around.”

Saying that, he looked at the door through which Noa had left through.

Claugh heard that.

“Eh? What does that mean?”

He asked.

Calne turned back to look at him and said:

“...Because it is like that? In the past Claugh-senpai was someone who didn’t value his life. But, it is different now. If she is here... If Noa-san is here, she will definitely be able to stop you from doing some boring silly things. So, Claugh-senpai has Noa-san by his side... is something that should be celebrated.”

He said that, carrying a smile.

“My work is reduced because of that.”

Claugh heard that, revealing an impatient expression and said:

“...Are you my guardian angel?”

“Heh heh, that’s right~ If you don’t become more independent, mummy will be very worried...”

“Idiot.”

“What’s next is if Claugh-senpai is willing to decide to find an opportunity to attack Noa-san, mummy will be relieved...”

“What kind of mother is that!”

“Haha.”

Calne laughed happily.

He looked back again, looking at the door that Noa had walked out of, after confirming it he said:

“...Speaking of which, Noa-san will be taking a while to return right?”

Claugh nodded.

“Eh. I think she will probably cook something for me?”

Calne raised his eyebrow as if he were surprised.

“Dishes cooked personally by her?”

“Eh. She has been quite interested in cooking as of late. For convenience’s sake she made some for me.”

“...You really believe that?”

“Eh? What do you mean?”

“...Ugh, nothing much, don’t tell me you don’t just depend on the deep

feelings of a girl's heart that "I hope for my future husband, Claugh-sama will eat the dishes that I personally cooked~"? I obviously mean that!"

"Ah? What does that mean?"

Seeing Claugh's reaction, for some reason, Calne sighed...

".....Such a dense man...Noa-san is really pitiful..."

"Ah?"

"Nothing nothing, it's nothing all. Then, shall we begin immediately?"

Saying that, Calne sat by Claugh's side.

Claugh saw this and asked:

"Then, you've already sent people to investigate?"

"Yes."

Calne nodded.

He took a few documents out of his arms to show Claugh.

Claugh received the documents.

"Ugh. This is..."

"Yes. Under the pretense of having a hospitalization checkup, I let the doctors or researchers proceed with the investigation."

"Then the results?"

So Calne pointed at the documents.

"Oh dear, I already deliberately made the reports very simple, so that someone who is as well developed, but simple like Claugh-senpai can understand, please read carefully~"

Claugh heard that, staring at Calne.

"...What do you mean by well-developed but simple... Wasn't my overall

academic results in the Private Forces better than yours?"

"Ah, ah, are you going to go into that matter? Your score was better than mine by only two marks... Speaking of which, the question for our batch was harder!"

Claugh heard that, carrying a smile.

"Oh, you're not pleased about your loss?"

".....Ugh...F, forget it, I'm not going to argue about it with you~ Anyway I can't defeat Claugh-senpai... Ever since I met you, after my nose was broken, my elite lifestyle has ended..."

Claugh heard Calne say that, and couldn't help but want to laugh.

Elite lifestyle.

Yes.

Calne's elite lifestyle was indeed ended by Claugh.

"Emirel Private Forces"—

That was the name of the place they grew up in.

It was a famous place that represented the darkness of Roland.

It was on par with Institute #307, one of the mad orphanages.

This was something common in Roland.

To protect the nobles, capable children were gathered, after a few abnormal trainings and modifications, brain-washings, experiments, they were grouped into the strongest protection force.

The people born from this institute, were seen as the children of Earl Emirel, they were placed in military clans, the better their performance, the more resounding the fame of Earl Emirel.

In the army, as long as they had the name of being the child of the Earl, they

would be given a corresponding position, immediately stepping on the road of elites.

And Claugh was the student of the eighth batch of the Emirel Private Forces, graduating in first place.

No, it should be said, if they weren't in the first place, they would be killed...

“...”

And Calne... was the first place in the fifteenth batch.

He was even called the big genius in the private forces that succeeded the extremely active Crimson-Fingered Claugh Klom who was already in the army, receiving a large amount of praise.

Normally, he should be in the army, on the path to elitism.

But, things were not so.

The reason was.

Claugh had killed Earl Emirel that Calne was in charge of protecting...

“...”

At this moment, Calne said with an expression as if he were recalling something:

“...Really... The first time I met Claugh-senpai, I was still muttering in my heart, this person is like a monster~ In an instant, my employer was actually killed... my elite life ended because of that.”

Claugh said when he heard that:

“...Haha. You wanted to become an elite?”

Calne said simply:

“I didn't want to. I should say, if Claugh-senpai appeared a day later... I would have killed the Emirel clan.”

“...Ah? Is that so?”

“Eh? You asked me... didn’t I tell you that before?”

“...Eh? Really? I don’t remember.”

“Ah!? Ne, it’s that. That person Emirel gave the boss of the bread store that I liked, the husband of Mrs Maimer a sum of money, forcefully taking Mrs Maimer as his own... I, because he got to her before I could snatch away Mrs Maimer, so I decided on the plan to kill them, didn’t I tell you that?”

Calne said that, Clauth nodded and said:

“.....Eh, now let’s return to the topic of the documents...”

“Ah, you’re ignoring me!?”

Calne shouted unhappily, but he was still ignored.

There wasn’t any time to go on about such boring things with him.

Truthfully speaking, Calne wouldn’t kill Emirel because of that kind of reason.

The real reason was...

“...”

But, Clauth stopped his pondering at this moment.

He couldn’t change anything by thinking about that mad period.

The first time he saw Calne, his expression was gloomier, sharper than the present. No, actually Clauth was the same. Everything in that period was that crazy...

The memories that awoke in his mind were only... only the dark and dirty portions.

There wasn’t any meaning in remembering that kind of past.

But now...

Claugh moved his eyes back to the documents that Calne had brought back.  
It was written on top—

The bearer of Alpha Stigma

The experiences and results of the checkup of Ryner Lute.

Yes.

The job that Claugh ordered Calne to go on was an investigation on Ryner Lute's actions.

The matters about the bearer of Alpha Stigma monster, Ryner Lute.

Ryner Lute was the name of the suspicious person who was recently wandering about inside the capital, who called himself Sion's friend.

“...”

At this moment Claugh used his left hand to touch the right arm that was covered with a later of dark colour.

Then.

“The bearer of Alpha Stigma...ah...”

He murmured softly.

That monster who ate Claugh's arm, his companion was wandering around in this city.

And that person called himself Sion's friend.

The monster was Sion's friend.

Who could easily acknowledge that kind of thing?

No one knew when that monster would reveal his true colours, harming Sion.

Even if he wouldn't harm Sion, the bearer of Alpha Stigma originally was quite a considerable risk. Once they were emotionally agitated they would lose control, killing the people around them.

Perhaps he was an assassin sent by some noble family, who wanted to use the Alpha Stigma going berserk to kill Sion.

Anyway, they definitely couldn't let that monster whose history was unknown to stay by Sion's side.

So, he would let Calne investigate this.

Claugh flipped open the report.

So he discovered—

“...So this person was born in the Institute #307?”

Calne nodded when he heard that.

“...Yes, he's an orphan like us.”

“...Ugh.”

Claugh flipped to the next page.

More detailed information on Ryner Lute was written there.

Once belonging to a special organization called the “Hidden Elites”, and he once had the name of “Roland's Strongest Magician” bestowed on him.

“Roland's Strongest Magician... Hah, he's clearly an Alpha Stigma monster, but he's actually so famous?”

“It seems so...”

“Since he's so famous, why didn't we know him?”

So Calne pointed at the corner of the report.

“Please look at the date. It has been a long time since people have called him that.”

“Oh? Then this means, that person is quite old...”

But, Calne shook his head.

“He’s older than me by one year... and younger than Claugh-senpai by five years.”

Claugh heard that, looking at the section on age.

“...He’s still a brat? Then...”

Calne nodded when he heard that.

“Yes. He was called the “Roland’s Strongest Magician”... when he was twelve, thirteen years old... that is an abnormal elite.”

Elite.

That meant—

“In that period that we attempted to kill Earl Emirel, and sneak in with the status of the anti-Roland, this person had become the dog of the military and was doing big works for them?”

Claugh seemed to say unhappily, frowning.

This meant, there was even more reason for this person not to be trusted.

In that corrupted period, he was the claws of Roland.

This kind of person shouldn’t be any kind person...

“...”

But.

In the next page of the report.

The activity log of the time when Ryner Lute was in the “Hidden Elite” was written there.

Claugh looked at this record.

It was written...

Abandoning missions.

Interfering with missions.

Leaking top-secret information.

Protesting against the higher-ups.

Speaking crudely, acting violently to nobles.

And, he had beat the person who was praised as the strongest elite of the “Hidden Elites” at that time... Quont Quo until he was half-dead, interfering with the progress of the mission, and was given the name of “Roland’s Strongest Magician”...

Of course, after that the military threw Ryner into prison a few times, going ahead with torture, attempting to correct his attitude, but... because they couldn’t observe any effects, in the end they gave up.

There was only one reason why they didn’t kill him.

Because Ryner Lute was a rare species that could return to normal from the berserk state, among the Alpha Stigmas, so they had to let him live on as a research material.

That meant—

In the borders of Roland, he was a person who was hated.

After that he came to know Sion in the place he was banished to.

Seeing this kind of history of Ryner Lute.

“.....Haha, isn’t this person interesting?”

Calne heard that, revealing a stunned expression.

“...Ah, really, I knew you would say that... Claugh-senpai is always like that, without prompting he would soften towards people who hated nobles.”

Claugh ignored him, continuing to look at the contents of the report—

The results of the checkup by the doctors and researchers.

First was reflex and body ability.

The number written there... was really too amazing.

It was a high number that even normal people could imagine of...

“...Ugh, the people who are born in Institute #307 should have this kind of ability?”

Claugh muttered, a joyful expression appearing on his face.

Subsequently about the Alpha Stigma...

There wasn’t any problem of special notice on the report.

According to their judgement, he was no different from normal Alpha Stigmas.

It was just, normally it was rare for normal Alpha Stigmas to reach this kind of age, most of them would lost control and result in death when they were in their youth or before they reached maturity on the mental aspect.

So, no one knew how well this person called Ryner Lute could control the Alpha Stigma?

But, just speaking about the danger levels, up till now, he had nearly never

lost control, so it shouldn't be that dangerous?

The results of the checkup ended with this as a conclusion.

“...”

Claugh saw that, his smile deepening.

Bearing the Alpha Stigma that could see through everything, just by looking at the magic structure.

The man born in Institute #307, and even called “Roland’s Strongest Magician”.

Body capabilities, reflexes largely exceeding the ranges of normal people.

Seeing these experiences of Ryner Lute, Claugh said:

“...Does this person seem strong?”

Calne heard that, hugging his head helplessly.

“Wa.....Your reaction is like what I expected... I knew you would ask that. But, you can’t. Claugh-senpai just recovered from a big illness...”

But Claugh had already stood up.

“No problem. I’m only going to punch him once to check out.”

“I said you can’t... Speaking of which, I can’t stop you, right?”

So Claugh smiled.

“Obviously.”

“Noa-san save me~”

But Calne’s voice didn’t reach Noa’s ears.

It would probably need thirty minutes or so, before the dishes would be ready?

Just speaking of time it would be enough. Because the other party should be

in the same hospital.

He only needed thirty minutes, and should be able to see the techniques of “Roland’s Greatest Magician”, and then rush back in time?

“...”

Claugh looked at his right arm.

The black cursed prosthetic.

The degree of recovery was at most 40%?

How much could this arm deal with the high-class opponent that was said to be invincible in Roland?

“Ne, Calne, can we immediately go to the hospital room of that person called Ryner?”

“.....No, that...”

Calne still wanted to say something, but—

“.....Ah...”

In the end he only sighed a large sigh of defeat.

☆

“...”

A period that made him unhappy.

Although time was that short, but it felt very long.

A momentary silence.

It felt very, very, very long.

“...”

The location was in the treatment room.

Although it was called a treatment room, the place was quite big, it should be called a treatment hall?

This seemed like a hospital building that only the royalty or nobles could use, it was accompanied by guards, nursing officers and six doctors.

Ryner examined this room, then looked at the doctor before him.

Yes.

The doctor standing before him now was about to tell them the results of their checks on Ryner, Ferris, Sion.

They should report the results of Ferris's checkup first, but...

“...”

Ryner stared at the doctor before him.

He stared at the doctor who was looking at the medical records, and groaning with a bitter expression.

“...”

But he was silent again. As if not knowing what to say... he still kept quiet.

“...”

Ryner saw that, he nearly stopped breathing.

What illness did Ferris have?

Ryner already had a few guesses in his heart.

Suddenly losing consciousness, and not having memories of the time after that, the illness that young girls came down easily with...

Nikeso illness.

Or Faustian illness.

But, if it were these two types of illnesses, if they spent a bit of time, there was a possibility that it could be cured.

But, if—

If it were Anphioerwhuin illness, Ferris...

“...”

Ryner looked at Ferris who was beside him.

She was like usual, expressionless. No, she didn't even seem a bit nervous.

In these three days, she was always shouting—I'm fine, I don't understand what Ryner and the others are worried about. In the end she even wanted to slip out of the hospital to buy dangos, as a result she was caught...

No matter what she still threw off the audience and escaped, because it was really helpless—

“For the next week, everyone is prohibited from selling dangos to a golden haired and blue eyed absolute beauty, with a long sword!”

Sion could only give this extremely silly decree to the whole capital of Roland. The confusion during this period of time was hard to describe in words.

But, this type of uproar ended because of this checkup's results.

If it were Anphioerwhuin disease...

She would probably die within three months?

“...”

He would even prefer not to think about the problem about the imbalance in

nutrition, and let her eat the dangos that she wished to eat.

But, the results of the checkup was...

Ryner stared at the doctor standing in front of them again, staring at the doctor who glared at the medical records and had not spoken up till now.

It was a middle-aged doctor.

He twisted his face.

His expression didn't look good.

It was a reaction that clearly showed that the results of the checkup weren't good.

"..."

At this moment, Sion who was standing opposite Ferris said:

"...Then, Doctor Pembor, what are the results?"

He asked with an uneasy tone.

So the doctor frowned again.

".....Ugh, it doesn't seem good."

Ryner heard that.

"Ah, I say doctor, don't pretend, hurry up and answer?"

He was really going to suffocate.

So the doctor stared at them steadily, then said:

"...That's right. Then, I will report the results straight away."

"The results are?"

Ryner and Sion said in unison.

The doctor continued:

"The reason for Ferris Eris-san suddenly fainting is..."

At this moment, Ryner unconsciously gulped.

The results were finally out.

Ah, God, please don't be Anphioerwhuin illness...

At this moment.

The doctor spoke.

"The reason for the fainting could be.....anemia due to only eating one food group and overwork..."

"..."

Only eating one food group and overwork.

Not only was it not Anphioerwhuin illness, it wasn't even Nikoso disease or Fasutian illness.

Simply speaking, it wasn't even any illness...

Only eating one food group and overwork...

"..."

The doctor's conclusion made Ryner and Sion speechless, looking at each other.

Then they looked at Ferris.

For some reason, she actually revealed a smug expression.

"He he. See? I said I wasn't ill."

"..."

Ryner heard that, breathing out.

Deeply, deeply breathing out, then forcefully, breathing in deeply again.

Then—

“.....As expected you ate too many dangooooooooooooooooooooos!”

He shouted.

Ferris cowered for a moment.

“Ugh... But, dangos are perfectly healthy food...”

“There’s no such thiiiiiiiiiiiiiiing!”

“B, but...”

“There’s no but! Really, as expected dangos cannot be eaten! You’re forbidden for eating them for a year!”

“A, a year... H, how can that be...”

Ferris was beaten by despair, this time it was Sion’s turn to speak.

“...Ah, but it is good that you didn’t come down with any weird illness... of course it’s not good to be a picky eater. But, overwork? What does that mean? Ferris hasn’t been sleeping properly? What have you been doing usually?”

Faced with this question, for some reason, Ferris displayed a fearful expression again.

“...N, nothing, I only lived normally...”

Ryner heard that.

“Can I invite this aunty not to lie! Could you please speak the truth?”

“Ugh...I, I’m saying the truth? I really had a sleep-early-and-wake-up-early routinely lifestyle...”

But, she only spoke halfway, Ryner looked at Sion and said:

“Fire the bomb!”

“OK... Like that, Ferris, if you don't say the truth, I will order Roland not to sell dangos~”

In an instant.

“Wa!?”

Ferris clearly received a mortal blow, and couldn't help but groan.

Ryner stared at her and said:

“Ne, can you speak the truth?”

So she said with a slightly small voice to say:

“.....That.....Actually I have been helping two stores who are about to start operating import their stuff recently, and I stayed for a few nights continuously...”

“It's dangos agaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaain!”

Ryner couldn't help but yell again.

This time he was really dazed.

He was extremely surprised.

Because she ate too many dangos, as a result selective eating caused her anemia, then because she worked through the night to for the dango stores that were about to open, in the end she finally fainted before Wynitt dango store.

From the start to the end it was all for dangos, dangos, dangos.

If this wasn't called an idiot, then what was it called?

You really are—

“...”

An idiot... when Ryner wanted to scold her.

But, the doctor interrupted him.

“But, the problem isn’t with her, in contrast it is Your Majesty, and Ryner the two of you.”

He actually said that.

“Ah?”

The two of them said in unison.

So the doctor had the same bitter expression that he had when he was staring at the medical records earlier.

“.....Do you want to die!!”

The doctor suddenly yelled.

“Eh?”

The two of them had the same reaction when they heard that.

But, the doctor glared at them viciously.

“I say the two of you, not only were you selective eaters, did you even have your three meals properly!? Originally you were malnourished, and to have the condition where you had lack of sleep until it was the extreme state added in... Your bodies are already in the dangerous region before you die of overwork! No, if it were a normal person they would have died. Definitely would have died! Compared to you, Ferris-san is an extremely healthy good child!”

The doctor said that.

Ryner and Sion looked at each other again.

Ferris who had become very small under their pincer attacks earlier, recovered her former smug expression.

“.....Heh heh~ you were speaking really loudly just now... what is going on, the two of you?”

She said with a strange tone.

Ryner heard that and said:

“Ah, no, I, I’m not in the wrong? Look, I want to sleep every day, but... Sion this idiot is always summoning me, wanting me to work overnight...”

At the side Sion interrupted:

“...Doctor, I want to ask you something...is there a way to maintain the current work load, but recover your physical strength?”

But the doctor shook his head.

“Your Majesty... This is really concerning the life of Your Majesty? If you don’t rest properly for a week, and avoid overworking in the future...”

“Ah, isn’t a week too long? I have already rested for three days, I can’t continue to be hospitalized... How about this, please cover up suitably in the medical records, just say that I am already recovered...”

“*He will probably say that, but please do not listen to His Majesty*”... Major General Kaiwal already told me this before...”

“Calne that person!”

Sion couldn’t help but scold.

Ryner revealed a stunned expression.

“I say, it’s rare for your subordinates to work hard for you to rest properly, so why don’t you rest stupidly for a week?”

He said.

The doctor heard that, nodding in agreement.

“That’s right, Your Majesty. You can stay here and rest properly, after you’ve settled your body’s condition you can return to your work station...”

But Sion shook his head.

“I can’t. There are many things that I have to do...”

Saying that, he started to flex his fingers and count, he was probably counting the amount of work? But he counted halfway and gave up.

Then as if suddenly remembering something, he looked at the doctor again.

“Ah, then, so that it is convenient for the necessity of me returning to work, please give me some medicine that will make me not want to sleep for several consecutive nights...”

“Hey! You can actually say something so scary!?”

Ryner mocked him.

Following that the doctor said:

“Th, that’s right, Your Majesty! The side-effects of this kind of medicine is very strong, your life span will be greatly reduced! Unless... unless you want to eat this kind of medicine...”

But Sion laughed when he heard that.

“No no, I didn’t want to eat them... at the moment I don’t want to.”

“At the moment!?”

This time it was Ryner and the doctor who exclaimed in unison.

So Sion stuck his tongue out knowing that he was in the wrong.

“I’m joking, I’m only joking. How could I eat it? Anyway, the person who prohibited the usage of that medicine is me? If I myself go against the law then what should we do?”

But, Ryner stared at Sion with a doubtful look.

Because he knew, if it were for the country or other people, this person would probably sacrifice his body without changing his expression.

But, Sion laughed again when he saw that.

“I’m really joking. If I died, then it would be meaningless. But... one week...

that's a very long time... I should just order someone to bring the documents to my room... ah, this is a good idea. Alright, since it's decided, I should quickly ask someone to prepare the documents..."

Saying that, he stood up immediately, not paying heed to the doctor's orders, leaving the room. The guards and nursing officers followed Sion too.

Ryner saw that.

"...That appearance is completely an illness... Working disease..."

He said in surprise.

But Ferris who was at the side for some reason, nodded her head in agreement.

"...I should go and tell Iris too, and ask her to send the dango meals to the room?"

Then, rapidly leaving the room.

Ryner saw that.

"...This person has the dango disease..."

The two of them seemed to want to die early.

Ryner sighed when he saw this.

Even so, in the time that they stayed here, the three meals had been provided by the hospital, in the night their light was controlled to, they were unable to stay up overnight, at least they could live a comparably normal healthy life...

No matter what, it was worth celebrating that Ferris didn't have any weird illnesses.

To this he was slightly relieved.

".....Hua~"

Sleepiness suddenly surged forth.

“...I'll have my afternoon nap.”

Ryner stood up too.

So the doctor said:

“...Really...as a patient, you are counted as the most exemplary.”

“Isn't that so?”

“Eh, sleeping from morning to night, this is my first time seeing a patient who sleeps as much as you do.”

After hearing the doctor's praise, Ryner laughed.

“As expected you think so too? I am thinking too, perhaps I am very suitable for being a patient as my occupation... why don't I stay here forever and become a patient?”

“.....Then, I will take my leave.”

Ryner's mad words did not attract the attention of the doctor.

The doctor left the room too. Ryner was left there alone.

“...Eh, then, I'll go back to my room to sleep?”

Just as he turned around, and wanted to walk to the doorway.

Things suddenly happened.

The door to the lounge was abruptly opened with a kalala sound.

Following that.

“Hey, is Ryner Lute here?”

A rough and sharp voice sounded in the room.

“...Eh?”

Ryner responded in surprise, at this moment, a man walked into the room.

A crimson-haired man.

Sharp eyes and a figure that had been completely trained, his height was probably taller than Ryner who was already tall enough by a head?

Ryner remembered he had seen this man.

He had met him within the borders of the Estabul Kingdom. At that time Ryner had left the country, Sion had chased after him...

When he attempted to defeat Tiir.

He remembered this person stood beside Sion.

At that moment this man lost his right arm... it was clear his wounds had just recovered, but he carried things out rashly, wanting to defeat Tiir, at that time he was shouted at by Sion...

He remembered his name was...

Ryner stared at the crimson-haired man and said:

“I remember you are... Pallonso or something?”

“Who is that?”

“Ah, is that not right?”

“It’s completely wrong, not even did you not get a single syllable correct, you didn’t even get the number of syllables correct.”

“It can’t be?”

“Really.”

“That’s a pity.”

It seemed that he had even mistaken the number of syllables.

That’s really weird, he remembered that he was called Pallonso or something.

This crimson-haired man attempted to rush into the inn that Tiir was hiding in, but was stopped by Sion.

“*No, Pallonso! Don’t approach the inn!*”

He remembered he had said that...

No, ah, unless it was—

“It’s Bome or something?”

“It’s Claugh! Claugh Klom.”

The crimson-haired man shouted as if impatient.

Ryner heard that.

“.....Really?”

“Why would I lie about my name!”

“Ah, ugh, that’s right.”

Saying that, Ryner studied Claugh Klom again.

The more he looked at him the more he knew he was a strong man.

His aura, his body, the sharpness of his eyes.

The arm that he had previously lost seemed to have regenerated. He was now wearing a glove, so he couldn’t see the condition under the glove...

“What business does Claugh Klom-san have with me?”

So Claugh revealed a happy smile.

“Nothing, I just wanted to greet Sion’s best friend.”

Saying that, he leaned in.

“Greet?”

Ryner asked, Claugh nodded.

“Eh, greet.”

So he reached out his hand, then smiled widely.

“Ugh, using this kind of method to greet might be a little impolite, but...  
dodge my fist!”

His arm suddenly attacked Ryner.

But his movements...

“.....Your movements are too slow.”

It was slower than what Ryner had expected.

No, even so, if it were a normal soldier, they probably would be unable to dodge.

To Ryner, it wasn't even worth mentioning.

Is it just like that...

Ryner narrowed his eyes, staring at the bottom of Clauth's palm, flashing past.

But.

“Oh, you can dodge this speed? Then what about this?”

At this moment, Clauth's arm changed its path.

And it was a speed that was many times faster than before.

“Oh!”

This time Ryner was surprised, moving his body and dodging.

Clauth laughed joyfully when he saw this.

“Ah, you can dodge this too? Amazing.....I haven't met someone with this abilities for a long time... then, this... how about it!”

“Ah, it got faster!?”

This time, Ryner couldn't dodge.

Ryner bore Clauth's arm, attempting to lock his joint...

But.

“Ha. Your strength is too weak!”

The arm that he attempted to lock momentarily sprung back, in contrast his arm was locked by the other party. Claugh went along with the situation to twist Ryner's arm, attempted to break his arm...

But—

“Damn.”

Ryner saw this, jumping in the direction that it was being twisted.

Then attempted to kick Claugh's face...

But, at that moment.

Claugh's leg flew over at a speed that was faster by many times that of Ryner's.

Aiming at Ryner's face.

There was no way to dodge...

But, he took on a defensive position in time...

“Wa!?”

But, Claugh's leg kicked Ryner down viciously without a second word, Ryner's whole body was sent flying.

Ryner finally adjusted his position and landed safely, but...

“...It can't be... I've already taken the defense measures.”

Ryner couldn't help but groan.

He only felt that his mind was swaying, his legs trembling uncontrollably. He had already settled into a defense position, but the impact from above still made him momentarily dizzy.

“Are you a rare creature?”

It was obvious, the other party held the advantage in terms of fighting strength.

Initially Ryner was clearly not like others on the aspect of muscular strength. Even if it were on techniques... they were about equal... no, the other party was stronger by a bit?

Claugh was probably thinking about the same thing?"

"Ugh. I hold the advantage on fighting power? It's probably because of that? In the end you are more specialized in magic? Because after all you are "Roland's Strongest Magician". So use your magic."

He said.

Ryner heard that.

"...No, in actuality I wouldn't use magic~ So, today it's counted as my loss..."

But, Claugh said when he heard that:

"Ah, really? Then, I'll use magic... If you are going to use a fighting method to welcome me, then you're welcome to it."

Saying that, his hands danced in the air, starting to draw a magic structure of light.

And the speed of the construction of the structure was so fast that it was surprising.

"Ugh, it seems like you're not a muscle idiot who just knows how to fight..."

Ryner could immediately see what magic Claugh was attempting to create. That was the one of the magic that he was very good at "Izuchi".

But, a few components changed the method. This man was trying to use a branch of "Izuchi"...

Then, the method to dispel it was...

Ryner widened his eyes.

So red pentacles appeared in his eyes.

Alpha Stigma activate.

In a moment, he understood the structure and way to dispel the magic Claugh was trying to use...

But, at that moment Claugh had already stopped drawing the magic structure.

He stopped his movements midway through, then running towards Ryner in one breath.

“Ugh, it can’t be... the magic was a feint?”

“That’s right.”

Following that Claugh’s right hand spread out in front before Ryner’s eyes.

In an instant.

Claugh’s white glove was opened...

A black hand appeared.

“...Ah? What is this? A cursed prosthetic?”

“You’re right again. Ne, what would you do, Ryner Lute?”

What to do?

If he didn’t dodge... he would probably be dead?

“Really!”

Ryner jumped back.

He wasn’t going to be polite anymore. He should say, the other party wasn’t someone that he could politely fool and get away with it.

“Ah, it’s really annoying.”

As Ryner spoke, his finger danced in the air, starting to write words of light. That was the magic that he had snatched from the Estabul Mage Knights through the Alpha Stigma in the past.

“I OFFER THE CONTRACTED WORDS, LETTING THE SLUMBERING MALICIOUS SPIRIT DWELL WITHIN...”

But, his magic was cast halfway.

“Alright, stop it the two of you!”

Suddenly a voice sounded from the doorway of the room.

Ryner stopped his movements when he heard that, looking to the door.

Claugh turned his head to look as well.

So they saw Sion who was carrying a large pile of documents and had come back at some point in time.

“Alright alright, the games can stop here, now is working ti—me.”

Ryner heard that.

“Ah? Work?”

Claugh continued to say:

“Hey, Sion... How can this be? You should be prohibited from doing work when you’re hospitalized!”

Sion heard that, nodding vigorously, saying with a steady expression:

“Eh, you’re right. This is bad... The doctor clearly instructed, before the cursed prosthetic stabilizes that I must maintain absolute rest, but I really wanted to try it out, so I came to find Ryner to fight~ If this were known by Ehn-san, it would definitely make her angry again?”

“...Ugh.”

Claugh was momentarily speechless.

Ryner who was looking at the other person’s misfortune with glee from the side said:

“...Ha, someone was scolded.”

“What did you say?”

“No~thing.”

Hearing the duo’s conversation, Sion couldn’t help but smile wryly and say:

“Enough, stop quarrelling. Really. Initially I wanted to introduce the two of you at a later date, I didn’t think that you would hide it from me and start fighting.”

Ryner heard that and said:

“No, I completely had no intentions of fighting with him, it’s this person he \_\_”

Following that Claugh said:

“Stupid! My job is to understand what kind of person is the person who is always wandering around Sion! Really, you actually pulled this kind of suspicious people in as your companion...”

“Ah? Who’s the suspicious person?”

“It’s you, you!”

The two of them seemed to start quarrelling again, Sion quickly interrupted them:

“I said do~n’t fight! Didn’t I say, the games have ended? Perhaps you didn’t know, but something urgent has happened...”

At this moment.

Claugh said frantically:

“Ah, oh no... it’s bad it’s bad. It’s actually that late? I’m sorry, Sion... I suddenly have something to do. So we’ll leave this matter for later. Is that fine?”

Following that Ryner said too:

“.....Ah ah ah, what a coincidence. I also have something to do. About the urgent situation, I actually want to listen to it, but what a pity I can’t listen to it... I’m sorry... ne, I have to hurry, I have to hurry and have my afternoon nap...”

Saying that the two of them made to leave the room...

Sion completely ignored them, continuing:

“Ah, it’s like that, I have work that I must have you help me to completely immediately...”

But Ryner said when he heard this:

“No! I don’t want to hear it I don’t want to hear it!”

He covered his ears, and was about to escape the room.

But, Clauth grabbed Ryner’s clothes from the back.

“No no no, Ryner Lute-san, aren’t you Sion’s best friend? You should stay for a little longer, and listen to the urgent situation that Sion is mentioning on my behalf.”

“Ugh, you!? I will kill... no, that, you’re the closest person to Sion... I think you should listen to the request from your lord?”

“No no no, I think the person to find to talk about the troubles of the heart, the best friend is the best candidate...”

“No no no no no, I can’t compare to the perfect and close comrade...”

“...Ah, really, I seem to hate you even more.”

“Then that’s really a coincidence. I hate your face too!”

The two of them squabbled as they pulled the legs of each other, in that period...

Sion still continued speaking.

“...Since the two of you are prepared to listen, then, the work that I must have you complete on my behalf is around four thousand sheets...”

“Are you an idiooooooooooooooot!”

Ryner and Claugh yelled together in tacit understanding.



The second day.

Ryner and Claugh were forcefully discharged, being pulled into the bullying storm in the name of duty, in the end...

Another five days passed. For the first time in the lives of these two people, they really collapsed because of lack of sleep and over work, and were sent into the hospital that was specially for patients with serious illness.

Noa screamed because of this matter, and Ferris laughed loudly, Sion on the other hand revealed his tyrant expression.

The time in Roland started from now.

And.

Ryner really started to plan the assassination of the extremely evil and immoral king, Sion Astal.

He started to plan the real imagining of “put a large pile of things on Sion’s bed that he hates: “Wa! Once the bedsheets are flipped, there are things that I hate in there...” plan!”...

This matter was temporarily left at one side. Yes, left.

☆

Anyway, that day was the start.

From that day onwards.

It felt like all the things were pushed along smoothly.

That day was the start...

And, the end would reach soon.

Thinking back on this day, those days of laughter were unprecedented?

Returning to Roland.

There was Ferris, there was Sion.

They really laughed a lot.

A long steady life.

It was long enough that it even made people feel that these days would continue forever.

But.

At that time he didn't realise it.

It was always like that.

It always was.

He didn't realise—

The important thing.

The important time.

The important people were in his hands.

He would actually be so careless, and even not discover the existence of the important things.

Then why did he discover it—

These days.

They were actually destroyed so easily...

Why did he discover that this was the end.

Why did he discover, that this was actually the last peaceful times?

It was always like this.

When faced with important things it was like this.

Always until the end, I didn't realise... the true important thing.

## **Chapter 7: And that opened its mouth**

She could hear the sounds of water dripping.

Continuously.

Without stopping.

She could hear the sound of water drip-dripping.

The location was in a gloomy prison cell.

She was tied up with chains.

“...”

How long had it been?

Living in a place like this that did not see the light of the sun, making people lose the concept of time.

What was filled in her heart was...

Darkness and deep unsettlement.

Had he been in the past like this as well?

Had he who had replaced me in prison been like that too?

Was he tortured by this kind of loneliness and uneasiness?

If it was that.

If it was that, what should she do?

“...”

Perhaps there was nothing that could be done.

Perhaps there was no way to see him.

“...Ryner.”

Kiefer Knolles muttered with a feeling of crying.

Red eyes that were blurred by tears. Red hair that had been dirtied by mud.  
Although slim, but it was a body that was curvy.

At the present she was in the far northern part of the continent that was very distant from Roland in the southern part.

In the Gastark Empire's...

Prison.

Someone had tied her to the wall with chains.

“...”

The reason she was arrested was because she knew the bearer of the **Alpha Stigma**...

The information on Ryner had been leaked...

But, from the start to the end she was unwilling to give a single word, so she had ended up in this state.

Ryner.

What was Ryner?

“...”

Kiefer thought. Why was it that in this distant land of the northern continent, Ryner was an important name?

From the conversation between the Gastark king Riphal Edea and the others, she roughly knew that, Ryner seemed to have some surprising power...

But she didn't know what power was it.

Kiefer herself vaguely found that, he wasn't a normal **Alpha Stigma**...

“What is that?”

She murmured softly.

She had always been searching for a way to save him, when she felt that she had found a lead after much difficulty, she didn't think that...

The answer was probably before her, but—

“...”

Kiefer stared at the chains on her wrist.

“...Why am I always unable to finish things, and fail to accomplish things?”

At this moment suddenly—

“Kiefer.”

A voice spoke from the other end of the darkness.

“...You are as beautiful as ever today.”

Shallow words.

The owner of the voice was that man.

The young king of Gastark.

Riphal Edea.

His figure appeared clearly after that.

He held a lit candle in his hand.

He had soft curly long hair. The colour of his hair was the special peach colour that only Gastark had.

And his eyes.

In the battle with Stohl he had unfortunately lost his left eye, it was always closed tightly. But the other eye—

The right eye that was opened wide...

Every time she saw that eye, it attracted her soul.

No, perhaps it attracted every person?

The strong light hidden in the depths of his eye. The strong will and wildness attracted everyone.

He who had these kind of eyes carried an innocent smile, as if he were a child.

“You’re really beautiful...”

Kiefer heard that, glaring viciously at Riphal.

“...Being shut in this kind of place, how pretty can I get?”

Then Riphal shrugged as if he were apologetic.

“...Then I’m sorry. But, Sui he... ah, that is my companion whose shoulder was eaten, and escaped with half his life left... He was injured in Roland? So, my companions are all filled with righteous anger. If I didn’t shut you in the prison... Under this situation, I can only act on you who is a Roland spy.”

Kiefer recalled when she heard that.

That girl called Kuu, who cried as she begged for help, and the man called Sui, who was dealt with a mortal injury.

And she didn’t know how they did it, they had frozen that man’s injury that had been chewed off by some large beast or something like that, and escaped.

It was clear that that was a mortal blow, it was an injury that was beyond saving.

But, they still said, perhaps that injury could still be healed.

Gastark wielded this sort of something that other people thought of as unimaginable existing.

Apart from the detailed information on the bearers of Alpha Stigma and Cursed Eyes, and the strange long sword—Glovil, that Riphal Edea used, just using one swing, it had destroyed tens of thousands of enemy soldiers from Stohl.

And the place that could heal this wound.

She remembered they said it was called Sacred Cave or something...

“...Can he...be saved?”

Riphal heard that, smiling as if he were very happy.

“Being so concerned about the enemy, Kiefer is indeed a compassionate person. As expected of the woman I love.”

Kiefer heard that, gently breathing out a sigh of relief.

“...From your tone...he was saved?”

Riphal nodded.

“...Eh, how should I say it? Although he hasn’t regained consciousness, but...he wouldn’t die.”

He wouldn’t die.

He meant, such a serious injury could be healed?

Roland had once used the therapy of using prosthetic limbs that had been made by magic to replace the lost limbs... but they weren’t able to heal such a serious injury.

The Sacred Cave was really...

There seemed to be some secret hidden there.

But, this was unrelated.

Anyway.

“That he could live... that’s good.”

Then she sighed lightly again.

She hated people dying. Because no matter what kind of person they were, they definitely would have the existence of an important person or a lover.

Riphal heard that, smiling:

“Kiefer is really compassionate.”

“...No matter how you praise me, I wouldn’t reveal a single word.”

“I know. I already don’t want to get any more information from you. Especially information on Ryner Lute, you will definitely not tell me. Right?”

“...”

Kiefer heard that, not saying a word.

Then Riphal laughed again.

“Ne, once his name is mentioned, you will stop speaking. You would mention the things in the Estabul kingdom or when in Roland... But once the topic involves Ryner Lute, you would shut up.”

“...”

But, Kiefer still didn’t say anything.

She didn’t want to betray Ryner. Although the situation wasn’t clear, but she had already decided she would not betray him.

She had always, always been betraying many people and countries.

But, she had already decided, only Ryner was the only one she couldn’t betray.

Even if she was tortured here until she died...

Even if she would be unable to leave this place for the rest of her life...

Only Ryner alone...

At this moment, Riphal said again:

“You definitely wouldn’t mention anything about Ryner to me.”

“...”

Kiefer did not speak.

Then Riphal showed a slightly saddened expression.

“...So I was thinking...would this person Ryner be your lover... so you would be this stubborn, refusing to speak... right?”

He said that.

Lover.

“...”

That word made Kiefer want to cry.

If they were lovers, then how great would that be? Betraying him, destroying his important things, causing him to be imprisoned... then, now she was still hoping—if they were lovers, then how great would that be...

It would probably wishful thinking.

So, Kiefer laughed lightly and said:

“...I...I don’t have the right. I am a traitor. With him... I’m unsuitable.”

Riphal heard that.

“...Unsuitable? That means, Kiefer likes him?”

He said that.

Did she like him?

In an instant.

His face appeared in her mind.

Again and again.

Every day she would think of his face.

Always sleepy, unmotivated, without me he would be unable to do anything.

Memories of them laughing together.

Memories of their important times.

The memories of everyone laughing together surfaced in a mind.

Did she like him?

Did she like him!?

Yes...

Yes...

“.....I do like him.....”

Kiefer said with a trembling voice.

Momentarily, her tears nearly overflowed.

She felt very foolish.

What was there to cry about?

What meaning was there in saying something like this in such a faraway place?

Why am I always such...

Then, at this moment Riphal hugged his head with a troubled expression.

“Ah! That means, I’ve been dumped?”

He said that.

Kiefer heard that, as her tears flowed she laughed.

“...Didn’t I tell you that there was no hope for you in the beginning?”

“Eh? It can’t be? Once, there was a slight hope?”

He showed a smile filled with confidence and said.

So, she said softly:

“.....I’m sorry.....”

Then Riphal stopped smiling foolishly, he showed a disappointed expression again.

“.....No, you apologising to me in this way, would make me feel helpless instead... But, but I do like you a lot?”

“.....I know.”

That was where his charisma lay.

No matter what he would go straight to the point.

He wanted to save people. He wanted to save companions. He wanted to save the world.

And, I want you.

It was really too straightforward...

If she didn't have Ryner, if she accepted his feelings like that, perhaps she could have gained bliss because of this.

“...I'm sorry, you helped me to cover many matter, right?”

The purpose of throwing her in prison was this.

But, Riphal laughed again.

“Ah, protecting beautiful people is the mission of men?”

Kiefer laughed when she heard that.

“Yes yes, you're very handsome.”

“I told you so? Then, try falling in love with me?”

“No.”

“Eh~ It's hard having a one-sided love...”

Riphal said, frowning as if he were troubled.

Kiefer laughed again when she saw that.

“This again. Someone like you must be loved by many other women?”

Then he replied simply:

“I’m tired of it.”

“Such a perverted man, I hate them the most~”

Saying that, Kiefer laughed.

Talking with Riphal, would turn out this way unconsciously. Going along with his pace, even if she thought about anything unhappy, she would laugh unconsciously.

“...The compassionate one isn’t me... it’s you.”

“Why do you say that?”

This time, Riphal really had an uncomprehending expression as he asked.

This person was really...

“...Eh eh, never mind. Then what are you doing today? What did you come to find me for? Anyway I wouldn’t reveal anything about Ryner.”

Riphal nodded as if he had expected that.

“No, I’ll leave Ryner’s matters at that. Because another of our companions who had direct contact with him returned.”

“Eh!?”

Kiefer heard that, couldn’t help but shout.

Once had direct contact with Ryner?

With Ryner...

“Ah, are you concerned?”

“Eh. I’m very concerned.”

Riphal heard that, clearly displaying an unhappy expression.

“Wow... Once Ryner is mentioned, you’re this straightforward, how annoying.”

“Isn’t it as direct as you saying pretty words. But what is the situation like? Then, since you know about Ryner, then what are you here for?”

She asked.

“...”

Riphal’s face twisted, his face was unhappy.

Kiefer saw that:

“What happened?”

Then Riphal contorted his face, as if he didn’t want to say it... and said.

“...Ugh, helping the woman I like... to see the other man that she likes... I’m thinking, as a man, doing this is really...”

In a moment, Kiefer was unable to catch the meaning behind this sentence.

Eh? The woman I like... to see the other man that she likes?

That means... the woman Riphal likes... From the contents of our conversation so far, it should be me?

And the other man that I like is...

“...Eh? You mean you want me to go and see Ryner?”

Kiefer said, Riphal sank into silence for a while as if pondering about something, then said:

“Ah, I think I’ll leave it.”

“You can’t ignore it! Explain things clearly! Explain clearly!”

“...Things?”

“Right!”

“...It’s going to be long?”

“Eh, you’re willing to say?”

Kiefer asked in surprise, Riphal raised his head to look at the cavern ceiling as if pondering about something again, then... he placed the candle in his hand on the floor, sitting down.

Then.

“Then... where should I start...”

Where should he start?

Yes, there was a large pile of things that she wanted to ask him, to hear him say.

But, the most important was—

“First, I want to listen to why you suddenly want me to see Ryner? What happened to Ryner?”

Riphal heard that, thought as if he were pondering again, then said:

“What has happened...? What has happened... No, it would be strange to say what happened to him. Because from the moment he was born he had a huge duty laid upon him.”

A huge duty.

This word made Kiefer think of Ryner’s face.

The face that was always unmotivated, but compassionate.

But, there was a sad expression that seemed to give up on everything hidden under this expression.

She remembered what he had said to her.

*Because I am a monster...*

Then.

“...The huge duty... You’re referring to the **Alpha Stigma**? ”

But, Riphal shook his head.

“...That sort of thing isn’t listed as a huge duty. Because the bearers of **Alpha Stigma** would usually die.”

He said, Kiefer heard that, tilting her head in suspicion.

“...Eh? Usually would die? Ugh, I don’t know what you’re saying... You mean, Ryner wouldn’t die so easily...?”

Riphal nodded.

“He wouldn’t die. Or I should say, if this continues, that person called Ryner would be involved in something more terrible than death. Because the king of that country has already started to change... the door of the Black Hero in the south is about to open. Ryner will be taken as the key... the one that is taken as the Offering of the Door will be consumed... He will live in pain, eternally undying... the method to save him is to die before he is consumed, or... wait for us to save him...”

“W, wait... that, you’re being too sudden, I can’t even understand what you’re saying... Eh? Demon? Offering... What is that...”

But, Riphal interrupted Kiefer, saying:

“Simply put, he will be betrayed by the Roland king. Then Ryner will fall into a Hell that is deeper than death... but, before that...”

But, Kiefer interrupted him again.

“I, I told you to wait. What are you saying? I don’t understand. He will be

betrayed... by the king of Roland?”

“Yes.”

“Who will be betrayed?”

“I am talking about that person called Ryner.”

“Eh, but...”

She was already confused.

What was Riphal saying?

The king of Roland...

Wasn’t that Sion...?

But, Sion shouldn’t betray Ryner...

“...What has been happening in Roland up till now?”

Kiefer asked, so Riphal stood up, taking a step towards her.

Then, he released the chains tying up her wrists, at the same time he continued:

“...The things that are happening in Roland... it is the same story as the past legend.”

He said that.

But, the words he said was confusing.

“A story of betrayal and despair.”

She really didn’t know what he was talking about.

“...Yes. The despair is too deep...”

She really didn’t understand.

She only it was something very important.

The most important thing.

At this moment Riphal said:

“...So before that... Kiefer, I want you to bring him here from Roland.”

He said that.

Bring him here...

“...I.....bring Ryner?”

“Eh.”

Riphal nodded.

But at the end he said this:

“I want you to save Ryner from the hands of the monster in the south—Sion Astal.”

I will save Ryner.

Save Ryner...?

“...”

Kiefer heard that, trembling slightly.

☆

The despair was too deep.

The darkness opened its maw...

☆

The location moved from there back to the distant south again.

The Roland Empire.

A beautiful mansion that was covered alone in the wilderness.

But it didn't seem like a noble's mansion, it was clearly smaller, but it wasn't accurate to call this type of house a normal house.

Lieral Lieutolu stood in one of the rooms of this house.

There were hundreds of soldiers surrounding outside the window.

He saw that.

“...Ah...I knew that it would turn out this way sooner or later.”

He only shrugged.

He stuffed several important papers into his bag, then arranged his appearance in the mirror.

Silk black outfit. This was the clothes that he liked the most.

His wife... had chosen this clothing for him in the past.

He should leave here now...

Just as he thought of that.

Knock knock knock, someone knocked on the door to the room gently.

“...”

Lieral heard that.

“Who is it?”

Then an extremely cold and gloomy voice answered like this from outside the door:

“...This is Lieutenant General Miran Froaude.”

Miran Froaude...

Miran...

Lieral heard that, couldn't help but smile.

“Amazing... it seems that you have been tempted by the darkness of Roland too... Humans are really animals that move in groups?”

Halford Miran?

The descendent of the Saint Knight Miran...

Lieral still smiled, asking:

“What business do you have with me?”

Then, the gloomy voice that didn't sound like what a descendent of the Saint Knight should have spoke from outside the door...

“I think Your Excellency should disappear.”

“Why?”

At this moment, the door was destroyed by a large black beast, then, a man slowly appeared.

Long and straight black hair, a slim body, and although it was a beautiful face, but the air that a human should have couldn't be felt, as though the face was frozen.

The man said:

“...So that you wouldn't kill Ryner Lute... before His Majesty has his meal.”

“Heh. Is that Sion Astal's orders?”

But, Froaude parted his crimson lips when he heard that, revealing a hint of a smile as he said:

“...Ugh, that is already unrelated, let’s stop the nonsense here... Please die.”

Saying that, he lifted his hand. A black ring was on the slim index finger.

That was probably the ring of the “**Dark Emperor**”.

The “**Dark Emperor**”’s...

“Heh, heh heh... You can’t kill me.”

Froaude heard that, a smile appearing on his face.

“Is that so?”

“Eh. Based on your power you can’t defeat me.”

“But, if I don’t try then who would know?”

“I know.”

“Then, let me try... Darkness...”

Lieral lifted his hand along with Froaude’s movements.

Then.

“Arte, Aireaire, Arla...”

He started to chant ancient words—

But.

His wrist was restricted by something.

“What is this?”

Upon looking, several threads that were so slim that they almost couldn’t be seen had wrapped around his arm.

“...This is **Latsel’s Thread**? There are other enemies...”

He looked towards the direction where the threads came from.

So he saw two people standing there.

One of them was roughly around twenty four, five years old? He was slim and tall, he was still young, but his hair was white. It was this man using Latsel's Thread.

But, Lieral's eyes stopped on the other man's figure.

The contours of his face were sharp, he had a capable face, and had a bitter expression.

He was probably ten years younger than Lieral?

Lieral knew that face that was scrunching up his brows.

“...Rahel Miller...”

So, Rahel said as if replying his question:

“...The Ghost of Roland...should disappear. Die.”

The Ghost of Roland...

Froade waved his ring.

“...Darkness, appear!”

In that moment, black beasts appeared, making to attack Lieral...

But.

Lieral still smiled.

He only kept smiling.

Because the ones that would die...

The ones that would die were—

“...You all.”

So—

So, the deep dark days of Roland began.

## **Afterword**

Greetings to everyone, I am Kagami Takaya.

“Densetsu no Yuusha no Densetsu 10: The King Fighting Alone” –

What were your feelings after reading it?

That's right!

DenYuuDen has finally reached the tenth volume!

Clap clap clap~

Reaching the tenth volume, there is a feeling of a repeated peaking, there is more of a spectacle that can be seen, I wonder what your opinions are?

Ten volumes.

I personally think that, this is an impressive number.

Because it has already reached two digits.

If I did not have everyone's support, I would not be able to hold on until today (If the book is unable to sell, there would not be any publishers willing to publish the books...)

Talking about which, I have published twenty books, eh~ how should I say... it seems like I'm complimenting myself, but it does make people feel quite amazing!? (This person, is really complimenting himself~!?)

And I hear that the story will continue to progress... The publishing company seems to be willing to let me continue with this challenge that hath no fear of the god, I truly can only thank everyone repeatedly.

Honestly speaking, the true ending is still in the distant future, so, if it's not slightly popular, it is not easy if the readers are determined to see it until the end...

Thinking of this, my body could not help but tremble slightly in fear...

So, please introduce DenYuuDen to your friends!

This is a kind of pessimistic announcement (Laughs).

Just like that, the next eleventh volume is the ending of the first part—probably.

The story in the next volume will expand on the places, the events of main core of the story that I wanted to write when I started writing this story, please look forward to it!

“...”

Although I say that, but the estimated page numbers for the next volume does not seem to be enough.

“Ah, I’m sorry... The first part will probably have to end in a twelfth volume.”

Once this sentence appeared, the extremely smart and capable editor M-san said:

“You, the commercial have already been released, Fujimi Shobo has already done their best to plan the ritual for the ending of the first part of DenYuuDen, and at this time... at this tiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiime... I am going to strangle you hard?”

What is going to be hard?

What is it?

Because things turned out this way, so I can only work harder.

Ah... But.

I have a feeling, the pages of the next volume will be extremely thick. I believe everyone has already discovered that the thickness of this book is not thin, it is really because the story has progressed to the last part of the revolution, there are many events that I want to finish writing in one breath.

With regards to how the story could progress...

I feel like it will become that!

The editor-in-charge called.

“There are too many pages! Be careful that I don’t strangle you hard!”

“Ah!?”

I have already been warned that there are too many pages for this book, what if the pages of the next volume are several times of this...

Auh.

R, run away.

Run away to Hakone or somewhere else... (Only thinking of going for a vacation?)

Oh yes, before continuing to write the afterword, there is something that I have to notify everyone, below is a notification.

I mentioned it in the afterword of “Toriaezu Densetu no Yuusha no Densetsu 7: Hardworking Time Limit” that went on sale last month, but now I will remind everyone again—

DenYuuDen's character popularity contest!

It is starting! (Editor's note: This activity is restricted to Japan)

I wrote about it in the previous volume, the rules are very simple!

I will roughly copy the rules that I mentioned in the afterword of "Toriaezu DenYuuDen 7".

(Wow, copy!?)

No, there are some parts that will be written differently, so

Then, let me return to the subject.

Explanation of rules for DenYuuDen character popularity vote!

The rules are simple.

In "Densetsu no Yuusha no Densetsu" series.

In "Toriaezu Densetsu no Yuusha no Densetsu" series.

The characters that appear in these two works.

"I like this person!"

"I like this character!"

When you have this person chosen in your heart, then write the name of this

character on the postcard and participate in the vote, this will do.

Let me remind everyone, one postcard can provide 3 votes.

So.

“I only like Ryner’s eyelashes when he is sleepy, so I am going to give all 3 votes to Ryner!”

You can do that.

“I~ I like Milk, Eslina, Noa these three people, I cannot determine who wins, so, I will give them 1 each!”

You can vote like that too.

Other than that, a person can send in several postcards, they will be all counted.

So.

“Ugh, I will offer my life to the beloved dango god. So I want to send in one hundred post cards X3 votes for the dango god, Ryner, what do you think?”

If you really wish to do that, that dango god or something, the strange deity that I do not know whether it exists or not will get three hundred points.

Just to inform everyone, the DenYuuDen character popularity vote will only accept postcard votes.

So, if you write it on the letter stored in the envelope or any other paper, I want to vote for some character, the vote will probably not be accepted, please take note of this.

Of course, you are welcome to send a long encouragement fan letter, but remember to send the popularity vote in separately.

Just like that, please confirm the rules again below.

1. The vote is restricted to the postcards printed by the company (those type that you can buy at the post office or supermarket)
2. One postcard is equivalent to three votes.
3. You can send more than one postcard!

Just like that.

Please send the postcards to—

102—8144

东京都千代田区富士见 1 之 12 之 14

富士见书房奇幻文库编辑部收

传勇传角色人气投票部

Just to inform everyone, the deadline for the submission of votes is the end of November 2006.

The details about the submission of votes and the voting process will be announced together in the afterwords of “Toriaezu DenYuuDen 8” and “DenYuuDen11”, please don’t miss it.

And the results are estimated to be announced in “Toriaezu DenYuuDen 9”.

Then, let us start the voting event!

We will await everyone’s passionate votes.

Other than that, when I am writing this afterword, according to the schedule, the next in line is the sales date for “Toriaezu DenYuuDen 7”, so presently I

have not received any postcards.

But, I think I can express the progress and situation of the votes in the next volume “Toriaezu DenYuuDen 8”, please look forward to it!

The explanation of the rules will end here.

Has everyone discovered what was the difference in the writing of the composition?

Anyway, please vote enthusiastically!

I look forward to receiving everyone’s postcards!

The things that I have to say have roughly been covered, I feel helpless that there are many pages for the afterword. But this is the consequence of my manuscript being too long.

If this portion ends, then the advertising for “DenYuuDen” or “El-Win” will take up too much space, everyone wouldn’t like that right?

Then, let us find some topic to talk about?

Eh—.

Are there any topics?

Ah!

There is something that I have to write about!

It’s like that.

I think, the people who read Dragon Magazine would have noticed...

The middle of this volume.

Roughly from page 302 onwards...

Timeline-wise, it is equal to the content of the short story that is being published on Dragon Magazine now.

Because the progress of this book's content caused it to turn out this way, the main story has finally completely surpassed the content of the short stories.

The last peaceful times in Roland... That is the current story that is published on Dragon Magazine.

The people who want to see the daily lives of Ryner, Ferris, Sion, Milk, Claugh, Calne, Noa, Eslina and the others should read Dragon Magazine.

I did not think that it would be so coincidental, perhaps the short story “Toriaezu DenYuuDen 8” that will be published next will enter the Roland arc that everyone is anticipating.

So, the story after the tenth volume will continue in “Toriaezu DenYuuDen 8”.

The readers who have not read the short stories, please start reading from the Roland arc.

But, the characters that appear in the short stories or the short story volumes are predicted to become vigorously active after the eleventh volume, thus those who act quickly, will definitely not have any losses!

Please give me your guidance!

Alright!

I should write all that I want to write now?

Then, let us casually talk in the following section!

Ah, that's right, something interesting happened.

It seems like an odd person called me.

It's like that, in the diary of the website that I host "Kagami Takaya Healthy Lifestyle" dated 18 March 2006, I wrote something like this.

(Mostly recapping my diary's content.)

"All in all when I am at home, my phone will be set on a voicemail setting, thus I told my editor-in-charge, when you call me please leave a voice mail for me..."

But, when normal people hear the voice mail message, they usually wouldn't leave any messages, right?

After they call, and hear the voice mail message, normal people would hang up the phone. So, usually only my editor will leave a message in my voice mail.

I didn't think that, today my phone would actually have fifty two and more voice mails, I wanted to delete the records, and tried listening to them once.

In the end!

Eh~ I am Matsuda from Fujimien. Eh~ I am Matsuda from Fujimien.

It was really unending!

Every call was using the same method of speaking—!!

(Diary ended)

(Editor: You, you initially deliberately used the first letter to represent me,

you actually leaked out my surname, what are you plotting!)

It was really too hilarious.

Last night.

My phone's voice mail box had other people leaving messages other than Eh~ I am Matsuda from Fujimien –san.

It's too suspicious!

It's too suspicious!

Do you know what the content of the message was?

After I pressed the button on the phone record that had the red light shining—

“I, it’s me! Hey, it’s me me! .....I changed my method of speaking to try.....I don’t know what the effect are..... Eh~ I am Matsuda from Fujimien...” It sounds really embarrassing!

This matter made me realise a truth.

I am someone who does not know what is called “moe” (holding some feelings for characters in manga, anime, meaning to be persistent about some matter).

Ah... Is this type of people what people now refer to as “moe”?

I am trying to understand it in that way.

The voice in the voice recorder was slightly different from the past, it was clear that he was trying to be cool deliberately.

After discovering this truth, I laughed until my stomach ached (Laughs)!

And let's not talk about this~

Then after the contents of that voice recording—

“You, quickly hand in your afterword!”

Ah?

Ah, no, I, I'm sorry. I'll send it in immediately...

Just like that, it seems that there isn't enough time, so I will stop here this time~

The next time we meet will probably in early summer?

I think it will be “Toriaezu DenYuuDen 8” which will be entering the Roland arc.

Of course, there will be an installation in Dragon Magazine every month, so please give me your guidance on the magazine's side as well!

Then, I will stop here this time.

Lastly I really have to thank everyone for the support up till now.

Ten volumes.

If I did not have everyone's support, I really would not be able to reach this number.

I am truly gratefully.

Thank you for your support all the while.

And please continue to guide me after today!

Then, I still stop here for today.

I look forward to everyone's character popularity vote postcards!

Kagami Takaya

## Translator's Notes

### Chapter 5

#### Seirei

↑ Seirei is a magic jargon term that first appeared in volume 5 of denyuuden. Please [see here](#) and it's [corresponding translator's notes](#) for more information.

#### Izuchi(True Word Version)

↑ Izuchi is normally written as 稲光, which is broken into (lightning flash + light). However, for Lieral, he terms his Izuchi as invoked by the 'true word' method, and it is written as 稲死光, which has an added kanji for 'death', implying that it is much more destructive, and also stated by Lieral himself to be much faster.

### Chapter 6

#### Mame

↑ まめ is pronounced as mame. The kanji for まめ can be 豆 or 忠実. Although the pronunciation is the same, the kanji 豆 means bean while the kanji 忠実 means diligent.